LOVE AAJ KAL:

An Exploration of South Asian American Romantic Relationship Beliefs & Behaviors

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Abstract

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South Asian society is collectivistic, with arranged marriage being the predominant method of relationship formation, dating and divorce being taboo, and marriage following the institutional/companionate model. On the other hand, American society is individualistic, with love marriages being the predominant method of relationship formation, high prevalence of dating and divorce, and marriage following the self-expressive model. South Asian immigrants to the United States have to navigate this cultural divide, which impacts socialization messages from first-generation immigrant parents and identity formation of their children.

This study surveyed 148 1.5- and second-generation South Asian Americans between 18-25 years old in order to understand how socialization of South Asian Americans into two differing cultures impacts their perceptions of romantic relationships. In the survey's results, respondents identified key themes in parental messages about romantic relationships, specific challenges of romantic relationships in the South Asian American community, and how both of those factors impacted their conceptualizations of romantic relationships. Overall, socialization messages from South Asian immigrant parents were tailored towards romantic relationships that more closely aligned with South Asian values while their children attempted to pursue romantic relationships that more closely aligned with American values, if not in a liminal space between the two cultures, which is the root of many of the internal and intergenerational conflicts between these groups.

Keywords: South Asia, romantic relationships, marriage, immigrant parenting, socialization

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An Exploration of South Asian American Romantic Relationship Beliefs and Behaviors

As one of the fastest growing ethnic groups in the nation, South Asians and South Asian Americans hold considerable economic power, yet very little academic research is published about this community. Improved data collection about this population is key to targeting various issues they face in the United States such as racial profiling, immigration, low election turnout, hate violence, and violation of civil rights. As South Asian Americans look to increase their social and political power, what role does actively researching into the dynamics of this population play?

Included in population dynamics is relationship dynamics. Close relationships "form the foundation and theme of the human condition" (Berscheid and Peplau, 1983, p. 19), and although close relationships have fascinated writers and artists for centuries, the scientific study of relationships is relatively young. According to the International Association for Relationship Research (2012), which advocates for the empirical investigation of relationship processes:

> Scientific investigation, through the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, is essential for advancing understanding of close relationships. As numerous studies have noted, close relationships form a fundamental source of meaning in people's lives. When asked what makes them happiest, people point to their relationships with friends, family, and romantic partners, yet relationships can also cause extreme distress and heartbreak. In order to understand people, it is crucial to study the relationships through which they experience their lives. (para. 1-2)

I chose to focus on South Asian Americans because I was curious about the processes going on around me that are not being formally studied, inspiring me to conduct a study of people who look like me and have my life experiences, as these are not topics that students are typically exposed to in traditional classroom settings. In order to truly understand the South Asian and South Asian American experience in the United States, further investigation into their relationships, in this case romantic relationships, needs to be done.

According to the 2017 American Community Survey data, the South Asian community – which includes immigrants or descendants of immigrants from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, and the Maldives along with members of the South Asian diaspora – makes up just under two percent of the United States population, approximately 5.4 million out of 324 million (SAALT, 2019). Indians comprise the largest segment of the South Asian community in the United States, making up over 80% of the total population, followed by Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Nepali, Sri Lankans, and Bhutanese, respectively (SAALT, 2019). Out of this 5.4 million, over 75% are foreign-born and less than 25% are born in the United States, with both populations expanding rapidly (SAALT, 2019). The South Asian American community grew roughly 40% between 2010 and 2017, and Asian Americans as a whole are expected to be the largest immigrant population in the United States by 2065 (SAALT, 2019).

The majority of South Asians in the United States fall into one of three immigrant populations: first-generation, 1.5-generation, and second-generation. First generation immigrants were born in South Asia and immigrated to the United States as adults, meaning age 18 or older. 1.5-generation immigrants were born in South Asia and immigrated to the United States before the age of 18. Lastly, second-generation immigrants were born in the United States to first-generation immigrant parents.

The target population of this study is select 1.5- and second-generation South Asian Americans between the ages of 18 and 25 years old, and the goal of this research is to understand how socialization of a target population of South Asian Americans into two differing cultures impacts their perception of romantic relationships. All second-generation South Asian American immigrants are eligible for this study, but in order for 1.5-generation immigrants to be eligible for the study, they must have immigrated to the United States by the age of 12 in order to be socialized into American culture (Rumbaut, 2004).

Multiple research methods were employed to answer the research question. First, literature reviews were used to provide background for analysis of the target population and the underlying circumstances that influence their socialization. Topics discussed in the background include South Asian and American norms around relationship formation; South Asian migration to the United States; and an introduction to South Asian Americans and the factors that shape their identities, beliefs, and behaviors, namely immigrant parenting messages contrasted with messages given by American society around topics of love, dating, and marriage. Building off of the strong foundation provided by the literature reviews, a mixed methods study was conducted in the form of an originally designed survey that was distributed online in order to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. The survey results were then analyzed using thematic frequencies and correlation tests to come to informed conclusions about the target population of South Asian Americans based on the sample of 148 anonymous respondents. The results and their subsequent discussion illuminate the ways in which South Asian Americans attempt to navigate this cultural divide. Ultimately, this research aims to better understand how cultural tensions between South Asian and American ideologies impact the multifaceted nature of romantic socialization messages and identity formation in this small but rapidly growing population.

Background

Ethnic identity is part of a positive self-concept that consciously anchors individuals to a particular ethnic group (Dasgupta, 1998). Central to this identity is a sense of belonging, as well as a commitment to the group's values, beliefs, behaviors, conventions, and customs. As this section will establish, the South Asian society that parents of adolescents were socialized into was collectivistic; lacking a norm of dating and casual romantic relationships; and characterized by arranged marriages that fulfilled lower-level, pragmatic needs (Dasgupta, 1998; Finkel et al., 2014). On the other hand, American society is individualistic; nearly requires dating as a method of romantic relationship formation; and is characterized by love marriages seeking to fulfill higher, self-expressive needs. 1.5- and second-generation South Asian Americans face a difficult task of balancing their ethnic identity while being socialized in a host country with very different ideology, resulting in internal conflicts for the young adults and intergenerational conflict between them and their parents, the specifics of which adjust based on the child's age and gender. This cultural tug-of-war is often coded as a maintenance of traditional South Asian values vs. assimilation into Western ones and will be examined in greater detail in the current study based on the following literature reviews.

South Asian Migration to the United States

When studying 1.5- and second-generation immigrants, it is necessary to look at their family's migration stories to build a foundation of certain patterns of behavior that may be specific to South Asian immigrants. Since the 1990s, research conducted in various settings around the world suggests that processes of globalization, transnational migration, and modernization have contributed to changing understandings of marriage and the role of love and intimacy within it (Hirsch and Wardlow, 2006; Reddy, 2006; Padilla, Hirsch et al. 2007). In this section, the primary

focus will be on South Asian migration to the United States post-1965 in order to draw a direct connection to the parents of the target population and when and how they came to the United States. But in order to do that, some background on circumstances in which immigration occurred needs to be established, including immigration laws that affected South Asian migration.

Pathways to legal immigration and citizenship in the United States have historically been difficult and limited. In 1917, Congress passed an immigration act known as the Barred Zone Act which severely restricted immigration from the Asiatic Barred Zone, a region that included the entirety of the Indian subcontinent (Migration Policy, 2013). Nationals from countries within the zone were prohibited from immigrating to the United States, although the law did make exceptions for students, diplomats, certain professionals, and their wives and children (Migration Policy, 2013). The Barred Zone Immigration Act also extended birth-right citizenship to children of Asian immigrants (Migration Policy, 2013).

The Naturalization Act of 1906 restricted United States citizenship through naturalization to "free white persons" and "persons of African nativity or African descent" (Naturalization Act of 1906). Following this act came other laws that aimed to discriminate against and disenfranchise Asians living in America. One such law was California's Alien Land Laws of 1913, which prohibited people who were not citizens – and were not eligible to become citizens – from owning land. This law in particular really upset Asian farmers, and they made it their aim to not just overturn this law but to create a pathway to citizenship for themselves and their communities.

The landmark 1923 United States Supreme Court case *United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind* attempted to challenge the ban on naturalization for Indians. The argument employed on Thind's behalf was that Indians are Caucasian based on North India's relation to the Caucus region in both language and migration patterns. The United States Supreme Court ruled that although Indians

might be “Caucasian”, they are not “white” in the conventional sense of the word and therefore ineligible for naturalization, preventing South Asians from gaining citizenship and stripping citizenship status from those who were granted it in the years prior (SAADA, 2018).

This law would stand for the next two decades, until President Truman signed the 1946 Luce-Celler Act which provided naturalization rights to South Asians, permitting the approximately 2500-3000 South Asians already residing in the United States to become naturalized American citizens, but still limiting the number of South Asian immigrants to an annual quota of 100 (SAADA, 2018). Prior to the passage of the Luce-Celler Act, only “persons born in India of races eligible to naturalization in the United States” could immigrate to America (*United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind*, 1923). For example, French and English nationals born in India could become U.S. citizens, but Indians were barred from entry except as visitors and tourists. The onset of World War II made the United States realize it needed to cement India’s friendship in order to ensure India would remain a stalwart against Japanese imperialism in Asia. This strategic gesture of goodwill was inspired by the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943, which struck a blow to Japanese propaganda that pointed repeatedly to Chinese exclusion from the U.S. in order to weaken ties between America and China (SAADA, 2018). While small in number, the South Asians who immigrated in the two decades following the passage of the Luce-Celler Act established South Asians as a noteworthy community and economic players in the United States.

In response to the Civil Rights Movement and international critiques, the United States changed its discriminatory immigration laws, beginning with the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, also known as the Hart-Cellar Act. The Hart-Cellar Act abolished immigration quotas based on national origin for the first time since admission quotas began in 1921. Because this act prioritized immigrants with either direct family ties to current Americans

or with high levels of scientific education, most South Asians allowed to immigrate at that time were highly-skilled professionals (SAADA, 2018).

This led to an increase in the number of South Asian immigrants, forever changing the racial demographics of the U.S. Since then, the demographics of South Asian America have also become more diverse: documented and undocumented immigrants, refugees, second, third, and fourth- generation South Asian Americans now comprise this community (SAADA, 2018).

Although spanning different countries, regions, religions, and languages, socioeconomically and in terms of migration journeys, the majority of the South Asian and South Asian American community in the United States is relatively homogenous as a direct effect of discriminatory immigration laws only allowing for highly educated professionals from the subcontinent. "A new wave of Asian immigrants came to the country after the 1990 Immigration Act that sought skilled workers during the tech boom. Many of the latest arrivals came from India, initially under the high-skilled H-1B visa program" that allows for employers to sponsor a restricted number of foreign-born, immigrant workers every year (Jan, 2018). In 2016, Indians were the top recipients of high-skilled H-1B temporary visas and were the second-largest group of international students in the United States (Migration Policy, 2017).

While this is how the majority of South Asians came to be in the United States, it is not everyone's journey. There is a portion of the population that immigrated to the United States as refugees, were sponsored by family members, overstayed their legal visas, or did not enter the country legal to begin with. In fact, although the vast majority of Indian immigrants in the United States are legally present, the Migration Policy Institute estimates that in the 2010-2014 period, there were approximately 267,000 unauthorized Indian immigrants in the United States, or just

under three percent of the 11 million unauthorized immigrants in the United States (Migration Policy, 2017).

Aside from this small population of non-traditional immigrants, there is a relative homogeneity in the level of education of the South Asian American community. Higher levels of education are linked with greater acceptance of the role of romantic love in relationship formation. For example, in a 2012 Ipsos poll of approximately 30,000 Indians spread throughout 18 states in India, geographic areas of higher education had a smaller proportion of the population who preferred arranged marriages relative to the general population. When compared to the national average of 74% of respondents believing arranged marriage is better, only 59% of respondents from West Bengal, New Delhi, and Tamil Nadu – traditionally more educated regions – preferred arranged marriages, while 88% of respondents from north Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Haryana – traditionally less educated regions – preferred arranged marriages (NDTV, 2012). So, in terms of the South Asian population in the United States, acceptance of romantic love can be affected by the family's immigration journey, and not all South Asians may share attributes integral to romantic relationship behavior and belief formation. As stated earlier, when studying 1.5- and second-generation immigrants, their family's immigration background plays a role in building a foundation of patterns of behavior that may be specific to South Asian immigrants, especially in regards to romantic relationships which are shaped so much by an individual's values and socialization.

Individualistic vs. Collectivistic Societies

Studies on the relation between ethnocultural factors and romantic love show that romantic love is more important as a basis for marriage in individualistic societies than in collectivistic ones (Dion & Dion, 1993). In order to apply this conclusion to my populations of

interest, we must first understand the key definitions and categorize which cultures fall under individualistic societies and which fall under collectivistic societies.

Individualism is "the subordination of the goals of collectivities to individual goals, and a sense of independence and lack of concern for others" (Hui & Triandis, 1986). In societies characterized by individualism, the main concern is with one's own interests and that of one's immediate family. In his study of differences in work-related values, Hofstede (1984) characterized societies in which individualism was valued as emphasizing self-realization, personal autonomy, personal initiative, identity based on one's personal attributes, and rights over duties. When this data was collected between 1967-1973, societies scoring highest on individualism included the United States amongst other prominent Western nations such as Australia, Great Britain, Canada, and New Zealand. In contrast, Asian societies, including those in South Asia such as Pakistan, scored relatively low on individualism. In countries scoring low on individualism, Hofstede (1984) suggested that the priority of the collectivity prevails, such that loyalty to the group's interests predominates, and in turn, in-groups provide for the well-being of their members.

Collectivism is defined as "a sense of harmony, interdependence, and concern for others," which at its core reflects "the subordination of individual goals to the goals of the collective" (Hui & Triandis, 1986). In collective societies, people identify with and conform to the expectations of extended groups – their relatives, clans, or other in-groups – who look after their interests in return for their loyalty; the individual goes along with the in-group even when the demands are costly. One important feature of this phenomenon that Triandis and his colleagues (1988) identified is an emphasis on social norms and duty as defined by the in-group over the pursuit of personal pleasure (Triandis, 1988; Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai & Lucca,

1988). One's place in the social system defines one's identity, and there is a greater dependence on social institutions.

Individualism, Collectivism, and Romantic Love

Expanding on Hofstede's (1984) work, Triandis and his colleagues (1988) believe that individualism-collectivism is one of the most important sources of cultural differences in social behavior. According to Dion & Dion (1988, 1993), "both individualism and collectivism are dimensions of cultural variation [that] contribute to understanding romantic love." The ideology of romantic love centers on pursuing personal fulfillment and following one's personal wishes, even if they oppose those of one's family and kin. This ideology is less likely to be encouraged in collectivistic societies than individualistic ones.

Goode (1959) presented a theory of love that makes predictions about the relationship of love and marriages across cultures. He argued that the importance of romantic love varies inversely with the strength of extended-family ties. In cultures with strong kinship networks and extended-family ties, such as in collectivistic societies, romantic love relationships are viewed as irrelevant and even disastrous for marriages because they disrupt the tradition of family-approved, often arranged, marriage choices. Romantic love in these cultures must be "controlled" through social disapproval to maintain the strength of kinship networks. Traditionally in India, for example, love before marriage was thought to be "a disruptive element in upsetting the firmly established ties in the family, [a] transference of loyalty from the family of orientation to a[n outside] person, and a loss of allegiance [for] leaving the family and kin…for personal goals" (Gupta, 1976, p. 78). Romantic love and intense emotional attachment are typically seen as threats to the Indian family structure and social order. Far from bolstering the joint family, these notions often disrupt it (Nyrop, 1985).

According to Goode (1959), individual freedom of choice must be controlled in societies where the interests of the extended family predominates. Hofstede (1984) and Triandis et al.'s (1988) notion of individualism-collectivism, while more general, leads to the same prediction: societies where the interests of the group predominate over those of the individual are characterized by less individual freedom of choice. Love, which is clearly associated with freedom of choice, is viewed as less important in marriage decisions in collective cultures.

In a cross-cultural study conducted by Levine, Sato, Hashimoto, and Verma (1995), undergraduate university students from eleven societies were asked to respond to the question "If a man (woman) had all the other qualities you desired, would you marry this person if you were not in love with him (her)?" with the three response alternatives being "yes", "no", and "undecided". 49% of the sampled young adults from India responded "yes," and 50.4% of sampled young adults from Pakistan responded "yes." This is opposed to only 3.5% of the sampled young adults from the United States responding "yes" and 85.9% of them responding "no." Other individualistic nations had similar response distributions as the United States sample; 4.8% of the sampled young adults from Australia responded "yes" while 80% of them responded "no," and 7.3% of the sampled young adults from England responded "yes" while and 83.6% of them responded "no" (Levine et al., 1995). Overall, other collectivistic societies outside of South Asia also had higher affirmative responses than those of individualistic societies, albeit by a smaller margin. For example, 18.8% of the sampled young adults from Thailand responded "yes" with only 33.8% of them responding "no," which is comparable to the "no" responses in the samples from both India (24% responding "no") and Pakistan (39.1% responding "no") (Levine et al., 1995). Levine and his colleagues (1995) found a positive relation between Hofstede's (1984) ratings of societal individualism and the importance of love as a basis of marriage.

The results of Levine and his colleagues' (1995) study demonstrates strong cross-cultural differences in the perceived importance of love as a prerequisite for establishing a marriage, which is interesting to have emerged from the sampled populations because one would expect college students to be considerably less traditional than their countries as a whole. The fact that clear cross-cultural differences emerged on love's importance in the establishment of a marriage demonstrates the perseverance and pervasiveness of cultural values (Levine et al., 1995).

Dimensions of individualism and collectivism provide a heuristic framework for better understanding romantic love. Given cultural change, immigration, and ethnocultural diversity, increasingly there is likely to be heterogeneity in the prevalence of psychological individualism and psychological collectivism within specific, traditionally individualistic societies. Psychological individualists can be found in collectivistic societies and psychological collectivists can be found in individualistic societies. Given the likelihood of diversity on these dimensions in changing or ethnically heterogenous societies, it is necessary to account for individualism and collectivism at the psychological level rather than to assume their uniform presence among individuals within a given society (Dion & Dion, 1993). For example, researchers studying personal relationships in some Asian societies should not assume that those taking part in their study, especially if they are university students, are psychologically collectivist. As Yang (1986) suggested, many of these students may endorse individualistic values as strongly as their counterparts in individualistic countries.

The search for personal growth and fulfillment through marriage based on romantic love assumes that marriage primarily should function to promote self-development. In individualistic societies, romantic love is valued as an important basis for marriage, and the ideology of romantic love contributes to expecting a high degree of personal fulfillment in marriage. Consequently,

heightened individualism has also contributed to increasing rates of marriage failure and divorce in the United States in recent decades (Brehm, 1992; Cherlin, 1981; Dion & Dion, 1988; Schwartz, 1988). Furstenberg (1990) commented that current ideals of marriage in the United States "virtually demand divorce" if the couple is no longer in love with each other. By contrast, in collectivistic societies, romantic love is less likely to be valued as a basis for marriage (Dion & Dion, 1993).

In regards to individuals who emigrate from traditionally collectivistic societies (e.g., South Asia) to traditionally individualistic societies (e.g., the United States), "we would expect that to the extent that they possess and retain collectivistic values, adult immigrants from traditionally collectivistic societies would not value the more individualistic approach to [romantic] relationships, including dating and the ideology of romantic love found in the host society" (Dion & Dion, 1993, p. 58). These beliefs and behaviors reflect valuing the freedom of the individual to seek his or her own personal development and gratification in close relationships beyond the family and to pursue these relationships without parental interference. In many non-Western societies such as South Asia, socialization is not directed toward the development of personal autonomy (LeVine, 1990). Instead, interconnected and interdependent social relationships are stressed; and it is assumed that family members will be involved in influencing each other's lives (Shweder & Bourne, 1984). From this perspective, parental influence in the lives of adult children, including arranged marriages, is completely understandable. A "love match," especially marrying for love despite strong family opposition, undermines the assumption of interconnectedness in families.

Although "romantic love is more likely to be considered an important basis for marriage in societies where individualism as contrasted with collectivism is a dominant cultural value,"

changes seem to be occurring in beliefs about the relation between love and marriage among recent cohorts of young adults in traditionally collectivistic societies (Dion & Dion, 1993, p. 58). Illustrating this point, the proportion of sampled students who chose the "undecided" option to the question about love as a basis for marriage was substantial, with India's undecided portion being 26.9% (Levine et al., 1995). A high proportion of "undecided" responses can be interpreted as an indicator of changing values, resulting in greater indecision and/or ambivalence on the part of some young adults in societies where modern views about romantic relationships may diverge from those of previous generations.

Arranged Marriage in South Asia

In present-day South Asia, a collectivistic society, arranged marriages are still the predominant method for individuals to form romantic relationships and enter into matrimony – about 70% of Indian marriages are arranged (Bain, 2015). According to a study conducted by Ipsos in 2013, approximately 74% of young Indians between 18-35 years old prefer to marry a partner chosen for them by their families over choosing a partner themselves (*Deccan Herald*, 2013). In cases of arranged marriage, parents and other relatives decide on a life partner that they deem as being suitable for their child. Low divorce rates and evidence of long-term stability among arranged marriage couples help this method of relationship formation to persist; India's divorce rate is about 1%, the lowest divorce rate of any country in the world (Unified Lawyers, 2017). But just because India has the lowest divorce rate in the world does not necessarily mean there is a larger percentage of happy marriages there. While the system of arranged marriage plays into India's low divorce rate, the low rate is also influenced by the social stigma against divorce that forces couples to stay in stifling marriages along with other social factors such the patriarchal system, low female participation in decision-making, and difficulty obtaining alimony

and child support. The social taboo of divorces can lead to emotional blackmail by the couple's families – often times one of the spouses refuses to let go of the marriage or families force unhappy couples to have children (Deccan Herald – Kurian, 2019).

The tradition of arranged marriages is built on commitment and duty rather than love and passion. Some would say the former factors are a stronger base to build a marriage on and thus lead to more positive relationship outcomes. According to Vanover (2016), there are three main factors that affect marital success and satisfaction: the presence of external support, effective communication, and quality time spent together by the individuals in the marriage. According to another study, factors that might be involved in a stable and satisfying marriage include being married to someone they like as a person and enjoy being with, commitment to the spouse and to marriage, a sense of humor, and a consensus on various matters such as aims and goals in life, friends, and decision making (Lauer, Lauer & Kerr, 1990). Additionally, husbands and wives were strikingly similar in their responses, demonstrating that men and women perceive the same variables to be critical in the success of long-term marriages (Lauer, Lauer & Kerr, 1990).

The collectivistic culture of South Asian society regards values and traditions above personal aspirations and happiness (Cultural India, n.d.). Family honor, pride, and social status are given more importance than the happiness of individual family members. Marriages are arranged based on the suitability of the match, which is determined using the rule of endogamy that declares that a person must marry within his or her own social group (Ingoldsby 1995). This rule applies social pressure to marry someone who is similar to oneself in important ways, including religion, race, or ethnic group; social class based on caste, income, and professional and educational background; age; and compatibility of physical appearances. These are the factors South Asian society uses to forecast shared values and relationship stability because they

have been found to be related to marital compatibility (Ingoldsby 1995). These factors are prioritized above personality and romantic attraction by parents in arranged marriages, even though the latter can also be important indicators of compatibility.

In South Asian society, criteria-based restrictions are seriously enforced when it comes to arranged marriages, severely limiting for individuals the number of matches deemed desirable for marriage. As a result of these constraints, individuals may find themselves having to settle for less in other aspects of a potential mate.

Although the practice of arranged marriage remains favored in South Asia, the process has seen some major modernizing changes. For instance, computers and online websites have taken over the job of traditional matchmakers, with computer algorithms predicting matches for individuals. The criteria for matches have also changed – for example in urban areas, working women are often considered better matches than their uneducated or non-professional counterparts, and their professional stature is regarded similarly to that of men (Cultural India, n.d.). Emphasis is put on education and values, rather than just efficiency in the domestic arena. Additionally, prospective partners are allowed to interact more freely nowadays, over the phone or even face to face. In fact, modern-day South Asian marriages have adopted a hybrid model of semi-arranged marriage, where individuals meet potential matches preferred by their parents, and if they provide their consent to the match, they are allowed to date for a designated courtship period. Courtship, if it happens at all, is primarily a precursor to marriage, and to speak of romantic relationships without consideration of marriage is not relevant for most young people in India (Twamley, 2014). If the courtship period goes well, then the couple can move forward into marriage (Twamley, 2014) While change is slower to take effect in rural areas, there has still

been a general increase in awareness around matrimony issues such as child marriages and dowry (Cultural India, n.d.).

While arranged marriages come with greater security with greater involvement of parents, there still remains the question of whether accepting a near-strangers as your family for the rest of your life is something people do willingly or would do willingly were there not a strong cultural expectation.

Love Marriage in South Asia and the United States

What American society considers to be a typical marriage is what South Asians call a "love marriage." The basic concept of love marriages – and major differentiating factor between the formation of love and arranged marriages – is that an individual chooses their own life partner, usually another individual with whom they have had a romantic relationship with or feel romantic love towards prior to marriage. In a social constructionist account, romantic love is defined by "idealization of the romantic partner, suddenness of onset, physiological arousal, and commitment to the well-being of the loved person" (Averill, 1985). In an evolutionary account, romantic love is defined as "any intense attraction that involves the idealization of the other, within an erotic context, with the expectation of enduring for some time into the future" (Jankowiak & Fischer, 1992, p. 150). Both definitions overlap greatly in the idea that "the experience of romantic love is expected to be all-consuming, fulfilling, and transcendent" (Dion & Dion, 1996, p. 7).

With love marriages, the typical restrictions of religion, caste, and social status do not apply when an individual falls in love. And while physical appearance plays a role in romantic attraction, the strict criteria used in arranged marriage selections are not imposed here, and thus do not play into marriage discussions (Cultural India, n.d.). According to Parry (2001), in terms

of choosing a mate, the younger generation is less pragmatic than older generations, caring less about their spouse's education and occupation and caring more about the intimate bond that they share. When it comes to love marriages, one tends to favor considerations of overall compatibilities in terms of interests, lifestyle, and personality as opposed to considerations solely based on social and professional status (Cultural India, n.d.). As a result, the chances are very high that the partners will have similar interests and great compatibility of personalities, which may not necessarily be the case in arranged marriages where two relatively unknown partners may possess starkly different life philosophies, resulting in lower compatibility based on personality. In cases of couples pursuing love marriages, they have ample opportunity to discuss their life philosophies in depth and explore their compatibilities. They may also have the chance to discuss their future plans and aspirations, allowing each to shape their career in ways that suit both partners well.

Love marriages present an opportunity to build one's life together with their partner. Love is the basis for the partners to come together in the relationship and with love comes mutual respect and commitment. These are pre-existing factors in a love marriage and the couple does not have to feel compelled to produce these emotions overnight. There is the comfort of familiarity in a love marriage because partners are generally acquainted with each other for a considerable period of time, often studying or working together if not existing in the same circles (Cultural India, n.d.). They are aware of each other's backgrounds, places of residence, and families. In some cases, even the families become well acquainted with each other over time before marriage. These interactions and familiarities ease the transition that the couple has to make after marriage, making it easier for them to adapt with situations. There remains a pre-

existing comfort-level and trust that allows for adjustment to the changing situation to be voluntary with much enthusiasm instead of compulsory (Cultural India, n.d.).

Love marriages are not a new phenomenon in South Asian society, but while they have been practiced for centuries, instances of love marriage on the subcontinent are still low. While exact statistics are not available, the Washington Post estimated in 2015 that less than 30% of marriages in India are arranged (Bain, 2015). In the last several decades, South Asian society has undergone tremendous change – the social fabric of society has become more flexible and gender equality is on the rise. As a result, interaction between potential romantic partners of the opposite sex has increased considerably, and this has contributed to the increased percentage of love marriages throughout the subcontinent. Illustrating this point, U.S. News & World Report estimated in 2003 that approximately 95% of marriages in India were arranged, and just twelve years later, the number has decreased to about 70% (Drey, 2003; Bain, 2015). A growing body of work is arguing that young, mostly middle class, South Asian men and women are forming relationships based on love (Parry, 2001; Donner, 2002; Fuller and Narasimhan, 2008; Twamley, 2013). In a study done in Nepal, young people associate love relationships with life success (Ahearn, 2001).

However, the phenomenon remains restricted to urban and semi-urban areas. In these areas especially, women have become much more independent, with the majority of them completing higher education and opting to have a career. As a result, they have more opportunities to interact with people from outside their communities. In many cases, such interactions lead to romantic relationships which, in turn, lead to love marriages. However, in rural areas, arranged marriages are a stronger and more stubbornly-held tradition, partially due to lack of awareness and education. But the scenario is changing quickly in those areas as well.

Though love marriages still do not enjoy the same respect or prevalence in society as arranged marriages, parents are becoming more considerate of their children's feelings, and love marriages are being accepted with much more openness nowadays throughout the subcontinent (Cultural India, n.d.).

Typically, gender-biased roles for both men are women are much more strongly enforced in arranged marriages (Cultural India, n.d.). The amount of judgment individuals go through – scrutiny of physical appearance in the case of women and financial status in case of the men – is a huge deterrent from strict arranged marriages by certain educated people nowadays. As times and societal attitudes progress, traditional gender roles are increasingly being disregarded in South Asia, especially in love matches (Cultural India, n.d.). Men are willing to shoulder household responsibilities while women are becoming more career-oriented and contributing as principle bread-winners of the family.

One of the major disadvantages of love marriages is the lack of social insurance associated with them. If the relationship were to have negative outcomes or not comply with society's standards in a matrimonial match, the couple would bring a black mark onto the family name and reputation for years to come. Historically, young people choosing their own life partners attracted a lot of social stigma for them as well as their families; it used to be seen as the ultimate act of defiance that a son or daughter could exhibit (Cultural India, n.d.). Even in present day, select parents do not approve of their children choosing their own life partners and can refuse to give their consent. This refusal can stem from reasons ranging from wariness of repercussions from other relatives and society to objections of the potential partner's social or professional status (Cultural India, n.d.).

Another major disadvantage of love marriages is the high level of expectations held by both partners, often rendering them to be ill-adjusted to adapt to the curve balls life throws. Throughout American history, for example, marriage changed from a formal institution that meets the needs of the larger society to a companionate relationship that meets the needs of the couple and their children to a private pact that meets the psychological needs of individual spouses (Amato, Booth, Johnson, & Rogers, 2007). While South Asia is still in the process of making the transition from marriage being a companionate relationship to a private pact, in the United States today, marriage has greater potential than ever before. Marital quality is a stronger predictor of personal wellbeing now than in the past, but contemporary Americans are also asking their marriage to help them fulfill different sets of goals than in the past. Take Finkel, Hui, Carswell, and Larson's (2014) suffocation model of marriage in America, which builds upon Maslow's (1943, 1954/1970) theory of human motivation. Maslow's theory states that the needs people seek to fulfill are arranged hierarchically, with lower needs (physiological and safety needs) typically possessing greater motivational priority than higher needs (esteem and self-actualization needs), and that relative to the successful pursuit of lower needs, the successful pursuit of higher needs is more likely to require self-insight. While development of such self-insight requires considerable cognitive and psychological effort over a sustained period of time, the fulfillment of higher needs is enormously gratifying, and doing so through one's marriage can help people achieve exceptionally high levels of relationship well-being, happiness, and personal fulfillment.

The title of Finkel et al.'s (2014) model, *suffocation*, comes from an extended metaphor linking Maslow's (1943, 1954/1970) hierarchy of needs to a mountain that couples embarking on married life are attempting to climb. The researchers' find that marriage in the United States has been "both *freighted* (asked more of) and *de-freighted* (asked less of) over time vis-a-vis the

essential functions [marriage] is intended to serve" (Finkel et al. 2014, p. 6).The suffocation model's metaphors of oxygen deprivation and suffocation comment on "the various ways in which American culture is sapping away precisely those resources most essential [to] meeting the higher altitude demands Americans have placed on contemporary marriage" (Finkel et al., 2014, p. 6). The two resources Finkel et al. (2014) discuss are quality spousal time spent together and the psychological resources required to engage in high-investment interpersonal processes.

In the individualistic society of the United States, individuals are asking their marriage to help them fulfill their physiological and safety needs much less than in the past and instead are asking it to help them fulfill their esteem and self-actualization needs much more (Finkel et al., 2014). Asking marriage to help them fulfill the latter, higher level needs typically requires sufficient investment of time and psychological resources to ensure that the two spouses develop a deep bond and profound insight into each other's essential qualities. Although some spouses are investing sufficient resources—and reaping the marital and psychological benefits of doing so—most are not. In fact, on average, they are investing less than in the past (Finkel et al., 2014). As a result, mean levels of marital quality and personal well-being are declining over time. Although the relation begins on the basis of love, there is no guarantee that the mutual feeling of love will remain forever, and if that is the only foundation of a romantic relationship, then it may not lead to successful outcomes.

Finkel et al.'s (2014) suffocation model provides an excellent illustration of the current state of marriage in the United States; however, the researchers "have not conducted a systematic analysis of the extent to which the suffocation model varies across cultures" (Finkel et al., 2014, p. 35). When the suffocation model is applied to societies outside the United States, such as South Asia, we see that much of the non-Western world has exhibited similar trends, although they have

tended to occur much more recently (Chan, Ng, & Hui, 2010). Some cultures may be in the midst of transitioning from relatively pragmatic to relatively companionate models of marriage (Chan, Ng, & Hui, 2010). According to Finkel et. al (2014),

> It seems plausible that marriage in Eastern cultures might eventually ascend to the highest altitudes on Mount Maslow, although it is also possible that cultures vary sufficiently in their motivational hierarchies (see, e.g., Gambrel & Cianci, 2003; Hofstede, 1984) that cultural development will lead to an ascent of a mountain that looks somewhat different from Mount Maslow. (p. 36)

Based on what we know from Finkel et al.'s (2014) research, it is possible that South Asian countries have yet to complete the transition to striving for self-expressive marriages, the difference being even more prominent between the South Asia that parents of young adults came of age in and present-day United States. It is also possible that the messages immigrant parents are instilling in their children about romantic relationships more closely aligns with achieving stable and successful institutional marriages or companionate marriages than the self-expressive marriages American society has socialized those children into wanting for themselves.

Institutional marriages, also known as practical marriages, are characterized as "formal institutions that [are] strictly regulated by law, social norms, and religion…[where] the stability of the family [is] more important than the needs of the individual family members" (Finkel et al., 2014, p. 3, Burgess & Cottrell, 1939; Burgess & Locke, 1945). Following with traditional South Asian marriage customs, in institutional marriages, "children typically were not allowed to marry without parental permission, and divorce was unacceptable (Finkel et al., 2014, p. 3). The reasons

for marriage formation were related to lower needs in Maslow's hierarchy, as spouses looked to their marriage to help them fulfill physiological and safety needs such as meeting family responsibilities and achieving financial security (Finkel et al., 2014).

Companionate marriages are characterized by emotional and sentimental reasons for marriage rather than economic or reproductive motives; an increased "emphasis on love as an important factor in marriage decisions" (Finkel et a., 2014, p. 4) and decreased "emphasis on family and kin relationships" (Twamley, 2014, p. 1); and a desire for deep intimacy, excitement, and sexual fulfillment in marriage. The shift from institutional to companionate marriages is driven by the notion that "marriage should be based on ties of affection and companionship between spouses…rather than being based on a code of obligations to society and religion" (Amato, 2012, p. 109). Companionate marriages seek to fulfill belonging and love needs, which fall at the mid-level in Maslow's hierarchy, such as sharing trust and one's life with a loved one (Finkel et al., 2014).

Self-expressive marriages are characterized by expressive individualism, or the idea that an individual has the "right to create their own identity and craft their own trajectory of personal growth" (Finkel et al., 2014, p. 5), which leads to relationships formation based on sharing authentic feelings and love acting as a platform to mutually explore each individual's rich, complex, and exciting selves (Bellah et al., 1985). The transition from companionate to self-expressive marriages in the United States occurred concurrently with the challenging of social orders in a variety of ways, including traditional gender roles in romantic relationships. Fulfillment of personal growth, autonomy, and spontaneity fall under qualities that self-expressive marriages are expected to fulfill (Finkel et al., 2014).

While love is increasingly a goal in forming romantic relationships, a "homogenization" of intimate relationship still does not emerge globally. Research points to the development of particular relationship forms in different contexts – reflecting the different cultural, economic, and gender-role contexts in which this "companionate marriage" ethic is interpreted (Hirsch and Wardlow, 2006; Padilla et al. 2007). Although modernization has been taking place over the past couple decades, traditional South Asian values around romantic relationships line up with institutional marriages edging towards companionate marriages, which explains why South Asian parents look at criteria such as religion, caste, and socioeconomic status when it comes to relationship formation. On the other hand, the United States is firmly in an era of self-expressive marriages (Finkel et al., 2014), so South Asian Americans who have been socialized in the United States have expectations of marriage to fulfill higher level needs and search for romantic partners accordingly. The discord between the needs of South Asian parents and their South Asian American children make relationship formation challenging and generates internal conflicts within South Asian Americans and intergenerational conflicts between them and their foreign-born parents.

Immigrant Parenting

Although the bias of United States immigration policies has congregated a relatively homogenous population of majority middle class, educated, highly-skilled professional individuals, the South Asian community is still a minority in the United States with values and norms that are distinguishable from the Euro-American majority. As a new minority immigrant group, South Asians have become deeply engrossed in articulating their cultural and ethnic identity. A significant aspect of the process of ethnic identity consolidation is the desire to socialize the next generation to accept key practices and rituals of the native culture (Spencer, 1987; Phinney

& Rotheram, 1987; De Santis & Ugarizza, 1995; Kar et al., 1995/1996). For the past few decades through the present, the South Asian community is deeply involved in this process with the next generation, many of whom were born in the United States.

Consequently, significant importance is given to discussions on how to foster allegiance to South Asian culture in the second generation. For instance, in a Conference on Family sponsored by National Federation of Asian Indian Organizations, Domadia (1988) recommended exposing children to Indian cultural, social, and religious programs, practicing religion on a daily basis at home, and teaching them consistently about approved living behavior as integral to teaching them about the beliefs and culture of their parents. According to Dweck (2007), individuals develop certain beliefs about others through experience, which contributes heavily to socialization, and those beliefs shape their attitudes and behaviors in crucial ways and can even manifest themselves in childhood, adolescent, and adult relationships. In the case of South Asian Americans, they are introduced to South Asian culture and the beliefs that come along with it while concurrently being socialized into American society and the beliefs that come along with it. Understandably, when attempting to form romantic relationships, South Asian Americans' beliefs and behaviors are influenced by both cultures, with their parents' messages being the main socializing method into South Asian society while they are living in the United States.

Socialization Messages and Identity for Children of Immigrants

After over half a century of increased South Asian presence in the United States, a number of studies conducted in the United States and Canada indicate that although immigrants from India have adapted significantly to their environment, they have retained their values concerning home, family, children, religion, and marriage (Wakil, Siddique, & Wakil, 1981; Kaul, 1983; Naidoo, 1985; 1986; Saran, 1985; Sodowsky & Carey, 1987; 1988; Moghaddam & Taylor, 1987; Kurian,

1989; Segal, 1991; Kar et al., 1995/1996). In addition, many scholars claim that Indian immigrants have transplanted old-world gender ideologies and clearly dichotomized gender roles in their adopted country of residence (Naidoo, 1980; 1985; 1986; Buchignani, 1983; Sodowsky et al., 1987; 1988; Ralston, 1988; LaBrack, 1988; Kurian, 1989; Agarwal, 1991; Kar et al., 1995/1996).

Among Western practices, the most controversial one for Indo-Canadian parents, regardless of language or religion, is dating and the free association of their adolescent or young adult children with potential romantic partners (Kurian & Ghosh, 1983). Based on research of a sample of Indo-Canadian immigrant families, Filteau (1980) suggested that both first- and second-generation respondents perceived a conflict between the concept of love valued in the traditional Hindu family and what they believed to be the North American ideal. For the former, themes mentioned included "respect, tolerance, obligation, duty, sacrifice, compromise, and marriage"; for the latter, themes focused on "individualism, materialism, independence, dating, divorce, selfishness, and romance" (Filteau, 1980, p. 294). The consensus amongst respondents was that "no clear obligation towards others grows out of the dating pattern in [Western cultures]" (Filteau, 1980, p. 295). According to Naidoo and Davis (1988), when asked about the areas of stress in their lives in Canada, over a third of first-generation immigrant parents from India reported stress surrounding "adolescent dating customs"; and nearly a fifth of respondents were concerned about "free choice marriage based on romantic love." The kinds of stresses reported by both parents and young adult children in these studies of immigrants in Canada may reflect the latter's desire for greater autonomy and self-reliance, consistent with greater emphasis on individualistic values such as personal choice and personal fulfillment stressed in the host society.

Within immigrant families, generational differences in the perceived desirability of dating and the importance of love as a basis for marriage can and do occur. In their samples of Indo-

Canadian respondents, Vaidyanathan and Naidoo (1991) found that 80% of second-generation, unmarried young adults had a favorable attitude towards dating, as contrasted with only 27.3% of the first-generation immigrant respondents who were the parents of the young adults. For the latter group, dating only became acceptable once the couple "commit[ted] to a permanent relationship." Among the older, first-generation group, the sample was fairly evenly divided between endorsing the view that "marriage precedes love" (54.5%) and "love precedes marriage" (45.5). Among the second- generation, the overwhelming preference (75%) was the alternative of marrying for love.

A manifestation of this intergenerational crisis is the first-generation South Asian parental community's inflated concern with the practice of dating. Dasgupta (1998) conducted a study of 46 educated, middle class Indian immigrant families in the United States in order to evaluate the success that immigrants have achieved in instilling Indian cultural views in their children and investigate their concerns with the continuity of ethnic identity via maintenance of traditional culture. Intergenerational synchrony in two specific values, attitudes toward women and attitudes toward dating, were examined as indicators of successful transmission of culture and identity due to being points of significant contrast between the South Asian and American cultural norms. It was presumed that these differences would provoke major intergenerational conflicts between the immigrant and the second generation (Berry & Annis, 1974; Rosenthal, 1987).

Distinct intergenerational and gender asymmetries emerged between first-generation immigrant and second-generation beliefs (Dasgupta, 1998). On their attitude toward dating, the participants of the study sequestered along generational lines with the sons showing the greatest acceptance of dating, mothers the least, and daughters and fathers in between these two extremes. The rejection of dating by both parent groups indicates the resistance immigrants feel toward this mode of romantic interaction (Dasgupta, 1998). Alternatively, the older adolescents of both sexes

in this sample showed more conservatism regarding dating than younger ones. This trend toward conservatism with age may suggest that parents have been somewhat successful in instilling Indian cultural values in their children, and that this process only becomes more rigorous as their adolescents approach marriageable age. Although, it is possible that this trend could be related to older adolescents' parents being in the United States for less time while socializing their children when compared to parents of younger adolescents. Because of this, older adolescents may have gotten more enculturated towards South Asian culture.

Attitudes toward women and acceptance of dating were not statistically linked in the fathers' group, or in the second-generation adolescents; however, the relationship found support among mothers (Dasgupta, 1998). Thus, mothers who possessed higher tolerance for gender equality also showed higher acceptance for dating behavior in their children. Furthermore, even though mothers were the least accepting of Western dating, adolescents of both sexes were more influenced by mothers' attitudes than fathers' attitudes, evidencing the important role mothers play as primary socializing agents in the Indian community.

Disparities in Socialization Based on Gender

In the second generation, sons showed the most favorable attitude toward dating, with daughters coming next (Dasgupta, 1998). That young women showed more reservation toward dating than their male counterparts indicates a gender bias in socialization. "[T]hose parents who did let their children date admitted to maintaining separate standards for their sons and daughters" (Agarwal, 1991, p. 49). A study on dating and arranged marriages conducted by Dr. J. Motwani clearly points to the differential treatment of sons and daughters in the Indian community (as reported in Domadia, 1988), with restrictions on dating and romantic relationships being more pronounced for females than males (Menon, 1989) since "the popular definition of a 'good Indian

girl' is one who does not date, is shy and delicate, and marries an Indian man of her parents' choosing" (Agarwal, 1991, p. 52).

Joshi (2000), from her research on Australian immigrant youth, points out that it is the behavior of second-generation immigrant daughters which indicates the level of a family's assimilation. Daughters in the second generation are faced with the burden of maintaining and preserving the reputation of the family, with societal expectations adding further pressure in the construction of migrant identities. Immigrant women, as the bearers of multiple social markers, are affected by cultural systems which are both enabling and constricting (Joshi, 2000) such that many of these second-generation immigrant women internalize structures regarding dating and romantic relationships. It can be concluded that responses from second-generation immigrant daughters can be used as an indirect measure of assimilation into the host society, especially when compared to responses from their male counterparts and foreign-born parents.

Samuel (2010) found a relationship between the experiences of Indian women migrating to Canada and shifts in attitudes towards institutions such as arranged marriage, bringing attention to the "culturally rooted pressures that professionally educated young women face when choosing life partners" in the West (Samuel, 2010, p. 96). For those female respondents who either had an arranged marriage or were undergoing pressure to marry someone of their parents' liking, it is possible to conclude that the greater the insecurity or exclusion felt by first-generation parents in the host country, the greater the chances of entrenching customs such as arranged marriage. The female respondents' stories suggest that the experiences of social exclusion by the migrant group – particularly those of the first generation – propel individuals to cling more strongly to customs brought over from their homelands; customs which, in their minds, are an important part of who they are as Indians (Samuel, 2010).

In Canadian society, there has been structural support for ethnocultural diversity, while the United States has traditionally had stronger assimilationist pressures (Dion, 1990). So while ethnocultural differences on attitudes and values pertaining to close relationships may be more likely to occur in societies such as Canada, based on Samuel's (2010) findings, exclusionary societies such as the United States have a greater likelihood of passing down more traditional South Asian customs, which is an important distinction to keep in mind when looking at this study's American sample and corresponding results.

The modification of arranged marriage, or rejection of this institution, and attitudes surrounding dating illustrate ways in which cultural practices are transformed in the diasporic context. There is a conscious attempt to preserve certain critical attitudes, values, and behaviors characteristic of the group, which is referred to as judicious biculturalism, an expression of active involvement on the part of immigrants to control the course of their own acculturation (Dasgupta, 1998). While findings show that first-generation immigrant parents mostly hold views from their native countries, second-generation youth's dating experiences are influenced by their gender, birth order, and family's acculturation, and these youths generally seek partners who are bicultural like themselves (Nesteruk & Gramescu, 2012).

Current Study

The background literature established precedent for intergenerational differences in the conceptualization of romantic relationships and relationship formation between 1.5- and second-generation South Asian immigrants in the West and their first-generation South Asian immigrant parents. However, my study aims to expand upon previous studies in two key ways: 1) this study was conducted on South Asian immigrants to the United States as opposed to other Western

nations, and 2) it provided more recent information to update many of the studies that were conducted in the 1990s and early 2000s, if not earlier.

The United States traditionally has had stronger assimilationist pressures than other Western nations such as Canada and the United Kingdom, which has traditionally provided more structural support for immigrants in order to foster ethnocultural diversity (Dion, 1990). This distinction in historic migration patterns and migration experiences in host countries may have impacted the values immigrants retained from their native countries and subsequently passed down to their children, thus affecting their beliefs on a multitude of topics, including romantic relationships.

Additionally, this study looks to incorporate research on romantic relationships and relationship formation that was not available at the time that previous studies were conducted. This study relies on Finkel et al. (2014)'s suffocation model of marriage and marital dependence zone models of institutional, companionate, and self-expressive marriages. The results of this study were analyzed using Finkel's lens, by applying those marriage models to South Asia and comparing it with marriage in the United States in order to form a more comprehensive understanding of the reasoning behind these intergenerational differences between immigrant generations.

Socialization of South Asian Americans into various aspects of South Asian culture occurs mainly through messages they receive from their first-generation immigrant parents and the greater South Asian community. These parental socializing messages reflect South Asian values while South Asian Americans are concurrently being socialized into American culture, and this dual socialization impacts South Asian Americans' conceptualizations of romantic relationships, in both their beliefs and behaviors. In order to understand the impact of this concurrent socialization,

I conducted a mixed methods study based on previous literature on relationships and South Asian immigrants.

My hypothesis is that the messages respondents receive from their parents will affect their beliefs and behaviors regarding romantic relationships. This hypothesis reflects broader, underlying assumption of mine supported by the literature cited above on socialization that was taken into account when designing the survey, and will be examined through themes that were derived from respondents' open-ended responses in the qualitative section. I predict the following themes will come up: emphasis on education and career over romantic relationships, dating outside one's religion, dating outside the South Asian community, when and how to tell one's parents that they are in a romantic relationship, an abrupt shift from being told to stay away from romantic relationships to being pestered about marriage and marriage prospects, and a shaming of premarital sex and non-serious dating. Previous studies in the background literature discuss the role that parents – especially immigrant parents – play in socializing their children about romantic relationships, even based on messages that are more implicit or indirect, such as how respondents' parents interact with each other in a romantic context, if they do at all (Dweck, 2007; Wakil, Siddique, & Wakil, 1981; Kaul, 1983; Naidoo, 1985; 1986; Saran, 1985; Sodowsky & Carey, 1987; 1988; Moghaddam & Taylor, 1987; Kurian, 1989; Segal, 1991; Kar et al., 1995/1996).

Second, I conducted quantitative analyses to examine how young adults' and their parents' demographic characteristics and life experiences are related to their attitudes about love and arranged marriages. Specifically, I calculated the frequencies of how respondents rated the importance of eleven characteristics in a romantic partner and ran a correlation analyses in order to test the relationships between respondents' and their parents' demographic characteristics and

life experiences with respondents' likelihood of belief that they will have an arranged marriage as well as respondents' likelihood of belief that they will have a love marriage.

As discussed earlier, the main focus of this research is to study the impact of how two different cultures inform 1.5- and second-generation South Asian Americans' conceptualizations and behavior patterns in regards to love, dating, and marriage. In order to analyze this and test my hypotheses, I created an original survey that contains both quantitative and qualitative measures aimed towards the target population, which is South Asian American immigrants between the ages of 18 and 25 years old who were socialized in the United States while at least one of their parents was socialized in South Asia; this population includes second-generation South Asian American immigrants and 1.5-generation South Asian Americans immigrants that arrived in the United States by the age of 12.

All components of this study deal with broader themes of socialization surrounding identity and romantic relationships, but, more specifically, they all center around relationship formation amongst this population. As mentioned at the beginning of this work, for these particular groups of South Asian Americans, I predict a lack of knowledge of love and dating passed down from their parents and other past generations, especially for individuals whose parents had arranged marriages or never dated or engaged in non-serious dating.

Method

The target population of this study is select 1.5- and second-generation South Asian Americans between the ages of 18 and 25 years old. While all second-generation South Asian American immigrants are eligible for this study, 1.5-generation immigrants must have immigrated to the United States by the age of 12 for socialization into American culture in order to be eligible to participate in this study (Rumbaut, 2004). In this study, 1.5- and second-generation South Asian

immigrants are treated as one collective group and are not being compared against each other because 1.5-generation respondents are a much smaller group than second-generation respondents.

This survey was designed to collect data on demographics, romantic relationships, and parental relationships from a sample of the target population. The purpose of the study is to learn more about how they view dating, love, and marriage, with special attention being given to how differences between respondents' and their parents' experiences are related to personal beliefs and behaviors.

Procedure

I received approval from the Institutional Review Board at the University of Texas at Austin to conduct this human-subject research. I created a survey online through Qualtrics and distributed it over the course of two weeks through snowball sampling, allowing participants to pass along the anonymous survey link and recruit future subjects from amongst their acquaintances. The survey was sent to the original participants through social media posts on my own personal page and on those of South Asian student organizations at the University of Texas at Austin, Rice University, and Texas A&M University. Calculating a response rate was not possible for this study because the survey was not sent to a pre-determined sample of individuals from which to construct a denominator; it was only distributed using social media posts and word of mouth.

The survey was preceded by a consent form that participants needed to read and agree to and a self-screening section that participants needed to pass before moving forward with the survey. The actual survey consisted of 38 questions divided into five sections: biographical information, parents' romantic relationship, your romantic relationships, relationship expectations, and parental relationship. Thirty-four of the questions were multiple choice, allowing respondents

to quickly and easily select their responses, in addition to making data analysis more efficient; these questions were used in the study's quantitative analyses. The remaining four questions were free text entries, making up the qualitative portion of analysis. All of the questions except the consent form and self-screening questions were optional. Every respondent may not have seen all 38 questions depending on how they answered certain questions because of the skip logic for certain questions in the survey, meaning follow-up questions were only asked when applicable. For example, if a respondent indicated that they had a preference as to the ethnicity of their future partner, only then were they asked what that preference was. If they indicated that they did not have preference, then they were not asked the corresponding follow-up question. The questions were created using the background literature and previous studies around romantic relationships and generational differences between South Asian immigrants. Many of the previous studies were purely qualitative or conducted through in-person interviews, so I adjusted the questions into both quantitative and qualitative questions for this study in order to reflect previous studies' themes.

The self-screening block consisted of four questions that confirmed eligibility to participate in the survey. In order to have been eligible to take part in the study, participants must have fallen into the target population stated above; participants must have selected that they were between the ages of 18 and 25 years old, of South Asian ethnicity, had a primary residence in the United States, and were a second- or 1.5-generation immigrant, with specific definitions of all potentially unknown terms being provided. If a participant provided a response that indicated that they did not fit into the target population, they were automatically taken to the end of the survey.

The biographical information section consisted of ten questions that covered demographic questions about the respondent and their parents. The section on parents' romantic relationship consisted of eight questions that covered the respondent's parents' marriage formation as well as

ensuing relationship outcomes. The section on the respondent's romantic relationships consisted of six questions that covered the respondent's current relationship status and their thoughts on their personal romantic relationship and dating opportunities. The relationship expectations section consisted of nine questions that covered expectations respondents and their parents had about the respondent's future, long-term romantic relationships, partners, and methods of relationship formation. The parental relationship section consisted of five questions, four of which were open-ended text entries that allowed for qualitative responses by survey participants. This last section covered parental socialization on romantic relationships as well as the intersection of South Asian and American values surrounding love, dating, and marriage.

Participants

I received a total of 190 responses to my online survey, out of which I deemed 148 responses, or 77.9% of the total responses, to be usable for this study. Out of the 42 responses that were not usable, 23 were incomplete, and 19 were ineligible. The 23 partial responses were all responses that were less than 86% completed, which included all participants that exited the survey before reaching the last page. Out of the 19 ineligible participants that attempted to submit responses, five were not between the ages of 18-25 years old, three were not of South Asian ethnicity, and eleven did not identify as a 1.5- or second-generation immigrant, eight were first-generation immigrants and three responded "None of the above". Due to the skip logic in the survey, not every respondent was presented with every question on the survey, and due to the nature of the survey, every question was optional to respond to. For the majority of the questions, the analysis of this data was out of the 148 responses.

In the sample, there were 94 (64.4%) females and 52 (35.6%) males. Age of respondents throughout the sample was fairly evenly distributed, with 2 eighteen-year-olds, 10 nineteen-year-

old, 15 twenty-year-olds, 37 twenty-one-year-olds, 28 twenty-two-year-olds, 15 twenty-three-year-olds, 14 twenty-four-year-olds, and 21 twenty-five-year-olds. Less evenly distributed were immigrant generation and country of background. Included in the sample were 27 (18.5%) 1.5-generation immigrants and 119 (81.5%) second-generation immigrants, lining up well with the 25 (17.1%) respondents being foreign-born and 121 (82.9%) being born in the United States. Out of the foreign-born population, seventeen were born in India, four were born in Pakistan, two were born in the United Arab Emirates, one was born in Nepal, and one was born in Singapore. Overall, 128.5 (88%) respondents had an ethnic background from India, 14.5 (9.9%) from Pakistan, 1.5 (1%) from Bangladesh, and 1.5 (1%) from Nepal. No respondents had an ethnic background from Sri Lanka, Bhutan, or the Maldives.

In terms of the respondents' parents, 282 (96.6%) were foreign-born while only 10 (3.4%) were born in the United States. As expected, more parents had arranged marriages than love marriages, with 98 (67.1%) pairs of parents having arranged marriages, 44 (30.1%) having love marriages, and 4 (2.7%) of respondents not knowing which type of marriage their parents had. Out of the respondents' parents, 134 (91.8%) pairs were still married to each other, 6 (4.1%) were divorced, and 6 (4.1%) were widowed. None responded that their parents were separated or had never been married, whether still together or not. Out of the respondents themselves, 89 (60.9%) were single, 53 (36.3%) were in a relationship, 2 (1.4%) were engaged, and 2 (1.4%) were married.

Measures and Analysis Plan

In a multi-part survey question, respondents were asked to rate the importance of eleven different characteristics in a romantic partner (religion, educational level, profession, income, physical appearance, personality, attraction, caste, ethnicity, intelligence, and country/regional background) with five possible response options: very important, important, neutral, unimportant,

and very unimportant. The respondents' ratings were analyzed in order to better understand South Asian Americans' values of importance when choosing romantic partners and the ways in which they conceptualize love vs. arranged marriages.

Included in the correlational analyses run for the quantitative results were measures to test the relationships between respondents' and their parents' demographic characteristics and life experiences with respondents' likelihood of belief that they will have an arranged marriage as well as respondents' likelihood of belief that they will have a love marriage. All of the variables being measures in these correlational analyses were derived from multiple-choice questions from the survey. The results of the correlation were analyzed in order to better understand factors that impact South Asian Americans' decision-making around relationship formation and their thoughts, feelings, and realities around love vs. arranged marriages.

To examine my research question, qualitative analysis was conducted by coding open-ended responses based on themes that emerged from the data as well as the six hypothesized themes. The three open-ended questions were "What types of messages did you receive from your parents about romantic relationships?", "How do you think the messages you received from your parents have influenced your attitudes and behaviors regarding dating, love, and marriage?", and "What do you think are unique challenges about dating as a South Asian American?", along with another response option for additional comments related to dating, relationships, or marriage. Frequencies and percentages of responses for each theme were reported along with example quotes.

Results

Quantitative Results

Response frequencies were reported for a multi-part question in which respondents were asked to rate the importance of eleven different characteristics in a romantic partner. In addition,

a correlation test was conducted on the multiple-choice survey question pertaining to respondents' and their parents' demographic characteristics and life experiences. There are key relationships that emerged from the data that relate to respondents' views of two different systems of relationship formation.

Importance of eleven characteristics in a romantic partner. The responses to the importance of religion, ethnicity, and country/regional background were fairly evenly distributed across all five response options. The responses for the importance of income were fairly normally distributed, with the extreme values of very important and very unimportant having the lowest frequencies. For importance of intelligence, 142 (97.3%) respondents rated it as important or very important, 3 (2.1%) respondents rated it as of neutral importance, and 1 (0.7%) respondent rated it as unimportant. For the importance of educational level, 139 (95.2%) respondents rated it as important or very important, 5 (3.4%) respondents rated it as of neutral importance, and 2 (1.4%) respondents rated it as unimportant or very unimportant. For the importance of profession, 104 (71.2%) respondents rated it as important or very important, 34 (23.3%) respondents rated it as of neutral importance, and 8 (5.5%) respondents rated it as unimportant or very unimportant.

All 146 respondents rated personality as being important or very important, and 145 (99.3%) respondents rated attraction as important or very important, with only 1 (0.7%) respondent rating attraction as of neutral importance. These two characteristics were used as indicators of the cultural values that promote romantic love in relationships. Caste also had a very skewed distribution – 135 (92.5%) respondents rated it as unimportant or very unimportant, 8 (5.5%) respondents rated it as neutral importance, and 3 (2.1%) respondents rated it as important or very important. Caste was used as an indicator of the cultural values that promote endogamous social group characteristics over romantic love as foundations for stable romantic relationships. For the

importance of physical appearance, 113 (77.4%) respondents rated it important or very important, 27 (18.5%) respondents rated it as of neutral importance, and 6 (4.1%) respondents rated it as unimportant or very unimportant. Physical appearance is a characteristic that is valued in both love and arranged marriage formations.

Correlated relationships with how likely the respondent believed they would have an arranged marriage. Multiple variables were significantly related to how likely respondents believed they would have an arranged marriage. There were significant positive relationships with how respondents felt about having an arranged marriage ($r = 0.57$, $p < 0.001$) and how compatible respondents perceived their parents to be ($r = 0.18$, $p = 0.04$). Also, respondents were more likely to believe they would have an arranged marriage if their parents had an arranged marriage ($r = 0.29$, $p < 0.001$) or if respondents were single ($r = 0.17$, $p = 0.05$).

There were significant negative relationships with how likely respondents believed they would have a love marriage ($r = -0.59$, $p < 0.001$), how long respondents had lived in the United States ($r = -0.25$, $p = 0.002$), how long respondents' mothers had lived in the United States ($r = -0.22$, $p = 0.009$), how long respondents' fathers had lived in the United States ($r = -0.19$, $p = 0.02$) and how happy respondents were with the current dating environment ($r = -0.25$, $p = 0.002$). Also, respondents were less likely to believe they would have an arranged marriage if they were already in a relationship ($r = -0.18$, $p = 0.03$). Overall, females felt more negatively about the likelihood of having an arranged marriage than males did, although its relationship with gender was not significant ($r = -0.07$, $p = 0.39$).

How likely respondents were to believe they would have an arranged marriage also had relationships with the importance of certain characteristics. Respondents who were more likely to believe they would have an arranged marriage put more importance on religion ($r = 0.17$, $p = 0.04$),

caste (r = 0.20, p = 0.01), ethnicity (r = 0.20, p = 0.01), and country/region (r = 0.26, p = 0.001), with the last one being the strongest relationship. These respondents also put less importance on attraction (r = -0.07, p = 0.41), physical appearance (r = -0.07, p = 0.39), profession (r = -0.09, p = 0.27), income (r = -0.03, p = 0.69), and intelligence (r = -0.03, p = 0.73), though none of those relationships were significant.

Correlated relationships with how likely the respondent believed they would have a love marriage. Multiple variables were also significantly related to how likely respondents believed they would have a love marriage. There were significant positive relationships with how happy respondents were with the current dating environment (r = 0.35, $p < 0.001$) and the age at which respondents expected to get married (r = 0.47, $p < 0.001$). Also, respondents were more likely to believe they would have a love marriage if they were already in a relationship (r = 0.31, $p < 0.001$) or if they were in a relationship with South Asian partners (r = 0.22, p = 0.01).

There were significant negative relationships with how likely respondents believed they would have an arranged marriage (r = -0.59, $p < 0.001$) and how respondents felt about having an arranged marriage (r = -0.24, p = 0.004). Also, respondents were less likely to believe they would have a love marriage if their parents had an arranged marriage (r = -0.27, p = 0.001) or if respondents were single (r = -0.17, p = 0.04).

How likely respondents were to believe they would have a love marriage also had relationships with the importance of certain characteristics. Respondents who were more likely to believe they would have a love marriage put more importance on education (r = 0.18, p = 0.03) and profession (r = 0.19, p = 0.02). These respondents also put less importance on caste (r = -0.01, p = 0.94) and country/regional background (r = -0.06, p = 0.48), though neither of those relationships were significant. See Table 1 for the full descriptive results of all key study variables.

Qualitative Results

Out of the 148 survey respondents, 100 gave responses to at least one of the four qualitative questions. All six of the hypothesized themes came up in varying frequencies, and respondents had a lot to say about them, as well as other themes that emerged from the data.

Emphasis on education and career over romantic relationships. Twenty-three percent of respondents discussed receiving messages from their parents or the greater South Asian community about the necessity of emphasizing education and career-related goals over romantic relationships. Included in this broader theme were multiple related parental messages, and these messages were given both implicitly and explicitly.

First, respondents mentioned messages that dating in high school was not approved of. One respondent said his "parents were not supportive of [him] dating in high school and only recently opened up about their acceptance to [dating]." Another respondent shared that her parents were "not supportive of [her] high school relationships, but now that [she] is closer to marriage, they are very supportive [because of parental messages she received that a romantic relationship is] not meant to be had unless it is to result in marriage." While yet another respondent noted that South Asian "parents sometimes discourage dating while in high school, but there is still an expectation (especially as women) to be married young." "Growing up, [one respondent's] mother would ALWAYS voice her disapproval of dating while in middle/high school, but she never explicitly forbade [the respondent] from dating. However, she never explicitly gave permission to date in middle/high school either. For these reasons, [respondent] didn't start getting romantically involved with people until college."

Second, respondents mentioned messages that romantic relationships are a distraction. While some respondents were told explicitly that romantic relationships are a "distraction from the

goals of getting an education," other were given "implicit messages that relationships were a distraction from school/career related goals." For example, many respondents shared that "school always came first," and they were given messages that reflected their need to "focus on [their] career first" or "focus on school first [and] relationships later." Some respondents did not agree with their parents' thinking when they told them to "focus on school [rather] than a relationship [because respondents felt] that both can be done at the same time." One respondent noted that she feels "more guilty about dating pulling time away from career-related things as a result" of the parental messages she has received.

Third, respondents mentioned messages that stressed the completion of education or achievement of financial stability as concerns and benchmarks for when it is acceptable to get involved in romantic relationships. One respondent's "mom and [grandma] spent a lot of time making sure [she] got an education and was successful as a priority to marriage," while many others were told to "just study" and "wait until after college to find someone." Another respondent said that parental messages about romantic relationships "are more in the form of warnings about the harms of romantic relationships when [one] is too young – too young being before graduating college." Financial stability was brought up multiple times as a benchmark for when it was acceptable to get involved in romantic relationships. Respondents received "very practical messages like…to worry about [their] own career first and never be financially dependent on a partner." Others received similar messages not to "date until [they were] stable financially," or to "wait until [they] are financially stable before [making] long term commitments."

Dating outside one's religion. Twenty-six percent of respondents discussed receiving messages from their parents or the greater South Asian community about dating outside one's religion, out of which 24% received negative messages while 2% received positive messages. Out

of the former 24%, some respondents noted that their parents explicitly stated their preference for the respondent not to marry outside their own religion, such as one Muslim respondent who was told to "make sure to marry within [the] same religion" and a Hindu respondent who was told to "only date Hindus." Other respondents received implicit messages not to marry outside their own religion, such as one respondent whose parents asked "when [she] is going to bring home a nice Muslim boy."

Some parents expressed a preference for a certain religion but did not consider religion to be an absolute requirement in a romantic partner. One respondent said that his parents "continue to say that they are fine with the ethnicity and/or religion of whomever [he] marr[ies], [he] know[s] that they secretly hope [he] marr[ies] someone who is Indian (preferably Gujarati) and Hindu." Another's parents said that their "partner doesn't need to be a Hindu Indian, but it definitely makes things easier." Other parental messages expressed preferences against particular religions only and would be accepting of certain other religions. For example, one respondent is "not allowed to date or marry a Muslim due to biases [his] parents have from living in India." Another respondent was "told [that] Hindus and Muslims should not marry." One respondent shared that he is "not religious at all, so [he does]n't believe that religion should play any factor in [his] marriage decision, [and] this directly contradicts the messages received from [his] parents." Another respondent said that "after hearing [his parents'] reasoning for why [his] potential partner must meet [certain] requirements, [he] realized those requirements are idiotic and that religion shouldn't dictate who [someone] spends [their] life with."

While some respondents were unsure of whether or not their parents would be accepting of a partner of a different religion, others felt that, despite their parents' preference, their parents would be supportive of whomever they brought home. One respondent said that he "think[s his]

parents would come around and support [his] choices at the end of the day, regardless of who [he chose] to end up with." Another respondent shared that her "family is very progressive when marrying outside of caste/religion." The explicit positive messages on dating outside one's religion were to "be with someone who makes [the respondent] happy, no matter their demographic." One respondent noted that his parents "have been very supportive of [him] having the choice to marry and date whoever [he] choose[s], and [they] do not care about things like race, religion, ethnicity, background, etc." Another respondent echoed that sentiment when she shared that her "parents have always said that [she] can be with anyone [she] want[s], regardless or literally anything," but she also acknowledged how those messages are different from those of "the 'typical' Indian upbringing."

Dating outside the South Asian community. Thirty-six percent of respondents discussed receiving messages from their parents or the greater South Asian community about dating outside the South Asian community, out of which 31% received negative messages while 5% received positive messages. Out of the former 31%, some respondents noted that their parents had explicitly stated that dating a non-South Asian or, in some cases, even a South Asian of a different national or regional background, is not acceptable. As one respondent said, in the South Asian community, "there is a lot of stigma against interracial dating." Another respondent said that his "primary issue with [dating a non-South Asian] would be the inability for [his] parents to accept and have a safe, warm relationship with [his] potential non-South Asian significant other." Because of this sentiment, the respondent continued to say the "dating pool is limited due to the small amount of South Asian Americans in the U.S., which is rendered even smaller if one feels the need to filter people by additional labels like religion, caste, region, etc."

While some parents were not welcoming of a non-South Asian partner, others were alright with respondents dating outside the South Asian community just not with engaging in romantic relationships with certain ethnicities or racial groups. For example, one respondent's "parents loosely enforced the 'BMW Rule,' so [he has] this weird, unwanted cognitive bias against dating Muslim, white, [or] black people."

Some respondents noted their own desires to have a South Asian romantic partner. One respondent said that "if dating a non-South Asian American, it's hard for the partner to understand the expectations set by parents," and another respondent said that he "want[ed] to find a South Asian bride because it makes everything easier life-wise." And yet another respondent noted that "it's so much easier to date someone with the same background [because] it gives you a lot more to talk about and it's honestly easier to understand each other." This same respondent said that "it's hard to be 'constrained' by [ethnicity] when dating [and that he would] fall for whoever regardless of ethnicity, but it's definitely difficult to have such big cultural differences" with a romantic partner.

Further, these messages were both explicit and implicit, and even more respondents were unsure of whether or not their parents would be accepting of a partner of a different ethnic or racial group. One respondent's parents told him to "follow his heart (but make sure she's Indian)," and another's encouraged him to "look for a partner who fulfills [him], but if that partner is also Indian, then that's literally the perfect package." Another respondent shared that although she is not sure what her parents think about interracial dating, she thinks that her parents "would look down on [her] if [she] didn't have an Indian significant other."

Other respondents received positive messages from their parents about dating or marrying outside the South Asian community. One respondent said her parents "want [her] to date and will

be happy with anybody [she] choose[s].” Another respondent received parental messages to “marry an Indian,” but, currently, she is “not dating an Indian, [and her parents] are open” to the relationship. One respondent received implicit messages in the form of precedent within her family because she has “a lot of older cousins and they married literally people of every other major ethnicity.” Another respondent received explicit parental messages telling her that her “happiness matters [and] love is important,” and, further, that her parents “don’t care if [she] marr[ies] someone who isn’t Indian.”

Telling your parents that you are in a romantic relationship. Fifteen percent of respondents discussed telling their parents about the respondent’s past, present, or future romantic relationships as a challenge around dating as a South Asian American and admit to hiding or a desire to hide romantic relationships from their parents. One respondent said he “look[s] to hide relationships from [his] parents and often find[s him]self struggling to mitigate conflict” with his parents around dating. Some respondents hid their past relationships or only did so when they were younger. For example, one respondent “was definitely secretive when [she] started dating [her] current partner,” and another’s parents “were not supportive of [him] dating in high school…which has led to [him] hid[ing] a significant portion of [his] life from [his] parents.” One respondent who was not in a relationship even said that “if [she] had a boyfriend, it would take some time before [she] introduced him to [her] parents of even told them about him.” Another shared that she had “secretive relationships before [her current one and] used to sometimes lie about where [she] was at [because she] was afraid of what [her] mom’s reaction would have been at the time.” This same respondent noted that “things have changed since [then], and it’s easier to discuss [romantic relationships] now.” One respondent summarized the overall responses quite well when she said

that "a lot of [South Asian] parents are more conservative than in some other cultures, which makes it difficult for young South Asians to be open with them about their dating lives."

Abrupt shift from being told to avoid romantic relationships to being pestered about marriage and marriage prospects. Six percent of respondents discussed receiving messages from their parents or the greater South Asian community that demonstrated an abrupt shift from being told to avoid romantic relationships to being pestered about marriage and marriage prospects. Three respondents noted that age 20 was when this shift took place for them. One respondent said that she "was expected to keep a distance from boys all [her] life. Now that [she is] above [age] 20, [she] frequently get[s] asked if [she] know[s] a guy [she] could marry." Another respondent said that from "ages 0-20" she was told "don't talk to boys [and] don't trust boys," but in "ages 20+" the messages shifted to tell her to "talk to boys." Similarly, some respondents noted that this phenomenon came in the form of receiving no messages about romantic relationships to receiving some or many messages about romantic relationships, especially marriage. One respondent's "mom only started talking to [her] about romantic relationships and marriage after [she] turned 20." As another respondent put it, parental messages about romantic relationships "go from zero to marriage expectations with a few years." Overall, respondents said that "parents believe [respondents] shouldn't date until after college and then are surprised when their child is not married immediately after college graduation," which leads to this abrupt shift in parental messages.

Shaming of premarital sex and non-serious dating. Twenty-two percent of respondents discussed receiving messages from their parents or the greater South Asian community about casual dating and premarital sex, out of which 20% received negative messages while 2% received positive messages. The overarching theme of the responses was that dating should not be casual;

as one respondent noted, his parents "told [him] dating was the precursor to marriage," which is why he "date[s] much more long term." One respondent shared that her parents "have made [her] believe that all relationships should happen with an end goal in mind." Another respondent said that she is "much more cautious about dating because of the tension associated with being in a relationship with [her] parents' disapproval [and would] therefore be extremely reluctant to date casually," which is why she would "only date someone who [she] could see [her]self potentially marrying." Other respondents were told that romantic relationships "are not meant to be had unless [they] result in marriage," one "can only date if [they] plan to marry" that partner, and to "only bring the right person home." "Messages [from South Asian parents] about romantic relationships imply that the first relationship [one has] once [they are] at a suitable age to date should be [a] serious relationship that [is] implicitly expected to result in marriage. The same respondent said that these messages "made dating feel daunting, serious, and confusing" because for South Asian parents, the "seriousness of dating and marriage are inflated."

Additionally, respondents noted parental messages that said "sex is taboo," and told respondents "no premarital sex." One respondent was told not to "have sex until [marriage]" and not to "live with someone of the opposite sex until [marriage]." Another respondent said that the parental messages he received about romantic relationships "decreased [his] desire to be sexually active or open because it was so frowned upon." And yet another respondent shared that because of these messages, she is "too scared to date [and] too scared to have sex." Parental messages "emphasizing that the only purpose of a romantic relationship is marriage fostered an attitude in [one respondent] that all dating leads to sex, and premarital sex is a negative thing." Another respondent shared that she does not "know a lot about sex since it's a bit taboo in [South Asian]

culture. Sex and masturbation are just not really emphasized or talked about, especially for South Asian women."

A couple of respondents did receive explicit messages encouraging romantic relationships that may not lead to marriage. For example, one respondent's parents emphasized that "Dating is perfectly ok, [and] dating multiple partners before marriage is normal." This same respondent also received parental messages that "love and affection are ok and normal" and that "marriage, though important, is not a priority."

Other themes. Other themes that emerged from the data include romantic relationships and communications about LBGTQ+ individuals in the South Asian community, media influence on romantic relationship beliefs and behaviors, and the perception of South Asian physical attributes in both the United States and South Asian communities.

LGBTQ+ romantic relationships. Five percent of respondents discussed the place of LGBTQ+ relationships in South Asian society. One respondent said that restrictions like "caste, religion, [and] stigma…are hard to overcome in a lot of cases, especially if [an individual] is not straight." For the South Asian LGBT+ community, one additional challenge is being unsure of how to come out to and discuss sexuality with parents because "LGBT+ relationships are not talked about at all in [South Asian] communities." One bisexual respondent said that she "feel[s] uncomfortable telling [her parents] about [her bisexuality], or bringing home a girl in the future…even while [she] know[s] [her] parents are liberal people." Another challenge is dealing with negative, trivializing, and generally unsupportive messages. One respondent said he received "negative" parental messages around romantic relationships because he is "gay, and [his parents] are disapproving." Another respondent said she "one tried to talk to [her] mom about being

bisexual [by] trying to speak in hypotheticals and [her mother] reacted with clichés such as 'Are you sure you aren't overthinking it?' and 'I don't want life to be hard for you.'"

Furthermore, some parents and elders are homophobic, while others are do not regard it as "immoral but…don't like the idea that their own child could be gay." One bisexual respondent noted that her "parents also aren't exactly homophobic, but [she doesn't] think they will be thrilled when [she] tells them that [she] is also attracted to women." Overall, "there is a lot of stigma against LGBTQ+ dating [that] pressures a lot of young South Asian Americans to conform to the expectations of [their] community instead of allowing them to explore all [types of] relationships."

Media influence on romantic relationships. Nine percent of respondents discussed how media has influenced their conceptualizations of romantic relationships. Respondents cited media influence in a variety of ways, stemming from respondents' "lack of communication with [their] parents (and other older people in the [South Asian] community)." Some respondents utilized American "peers and media to learn everything [they] need to know" about dating because "once [South Asian Americans] are in relationships, [they] often don't have people to turn to for advice". One respondent "knew that [his parents'] way [of thinking about romantic relationships] was just not how it worked in [an] American setting, [and] since [he] had to figure it all out by [him]self, [his conceptualization of romantic relationships] was even more heavily influenced by media (like TV and movies)." Another respondent said that she is "more optimistic because [she] learned about love and romance from books and movies rather than [from her] parents." Similarly, another respondent said she has "learned more about relationships by…reading 'Dear Abby' advice columns in the newspaper growing up, being on Tumblr from ages 16-18, and reading about and watching relationships in movies, TV shows, and books" than she did from conversations with her parents.

Meanwhile, other respondents' expectations about romantic relationships were influenced by Bollywood movies and relationships. One respondent said that "Bollywood ([and] other South Asian film industries) negatively affect [South Asian Americans'] view[s] of relationships as a whole." Another said "Bollywood definitely influences family and gender stereotypes." This respondent shared that although she is "an aspiring chemical engineer, graduating at the top of [her] class, and have a great job with a great salary lined up, when [she] go[es] home and watch[es] Ekta Kapoor TV serials, [she] wonder[s] if [her] life would be better off as a housewife."

Perceptions of South Asian physical attributes in the United States and South Asian communities. Thirteen percent of respondents discussed challenges of dating related to physical attributes of South Asians.

Five percent of respondents cited colorism. One respondent noted that, in the South Asian society, "the normalized colorism is a big issue." She elaborated by saying that "lots of members of [her] community make comments [on] a girl's skin color (either being dark and ugly or light and pretty). Many mothers make their own daughter[s] self-conscious of their skin color and try to ritualize lemons, Fair and Lovely, turmeric, etc. to lighten their skin." The same respondent said that even though she has been a few exceptions, overall "Desi men often go for [or] respect light-skinned Desi girls more, [and] all of these comments and tactics are tied into [who]'s considered [to be] a worthy, beautiful wife"

Six percent of respondents cited Western beauty standards and fetishization. One respondent noted that "Desi features aren't included in [Western] beauty standards, and [she] often see[s] men prefer white women more." Another respondent said that it is challenging for South Asian Americans to "not fit in as white or South Asian." One more respondent said that "being raised in America, [South Asian Americans] are not conventionally found as 'attractive' or

‘desired,’ [and that they] are ‘otherized’” by American society. Another respondent noted that “there are some Americans that fetishize Desis, and there’s some that are completely turned off by [Desis, so] it’s a mixed bag of reactions.” Multiple respondents noted that South Asian Americans “can be fetishized,” but one respondent pointed out that “fetishization is [a challenge] but not necessarily unique” to South Asian Americans.

Two percent of respondents cited South Asian stereotypes. One respondent said that “South Asians always get looked down upon and made fun of or are usually assumed to be FOBs even if [they] were born and raised in the US.” Another respondent noted that “South Asian men are viewed as unattractive or predatory by society, [which] restrict[s] opportunities” for romantic relationship formation.

Challenges and their impact on South Asian American beliefs and behaviors. Overall, the respondents cited an “inability to talk to [their] parents and the pressures of sustaining a culture” as two of the largest challenges around romantic relationship that are underlying causes of the other themes that were brought up. One respondent summarized the responses of many other respondents with her comment that:

> Due to the lack of communication with [their] parents and other older people in the [South Asian] community, South Asian Americans go into the dating world blind. [They] don’t know what to expect, what [they deserve], [or] how healthy relationships should look. [They] are not told anything or given any advice. By being expected to never date, [they] never get taught how to date.

Another respondent shared a comprehensive answer of his own:

> The main challenge in dating as a South Asian American is the lack of an established blueprint demonstrating how a good South Asian partner in the 21st century should act. Navigating all this is difficult -- ultimately, I want to be in a relationship that doesn't alienate my parents or diverge too far from my own South Asian-ness by taking on too many characteristics of a "white" relationship, but I also want to be in an equitable relationship where both partners are equally valued. I don't have any role models on how to do this. I also don't really have anyone to talk to or guide me through "firsts" – physical intimacy, fights, etc. Since I can't talk to my parents about any of this, I feel occasionally guilty about being in a relationship without their approval in the first place and wish I had more guidance as I progressed through it. I suspect these challenges are pretty common among many South Asian Americans.

Many respondents commented on a lack of communication about romantic relationships with their parents. One respondent said that "the lack of 'messages' has led [him] to be unsure about [navigating romantic relationships because he's] not sure how to talk about it with [his] parents." One respondent received messages that "it's not okay to date or talk about relationships," while another respondent shared that he "think[s his parents] have influenced [him] but not as much as if they had talked more about romantic relationships with [him]." Yet another respondent said that her "parents didn't really talk to [her] about [romantic relationships] that much, which is its own weird message. [She] was expected to figure it out on [her] own." One more respondent said that she "could never talk to [her] mom about relationship issues or anything." Another respondent "wish[es she] was able to talk to [her] parents more freely about romantic relationships, as having to hide significant aspects of [her] life from them has seriously strained [her]

relationships with [her parents].” Because respondents did not talk about romantic relationships with their parents, they often “don’t know what [their] parents are cool with or not,” leading to more uncertainty along with any negative messages they might receive. Although, this is not the experience of every South Asian American; one respondent said he felt “supported and comfortable talking to [his parents] about [romantic relationships].”

Due to this lack of communications, multiple respondents noted that they learn about relationships from observing their parents’ relationship. For example, one respondent said that she “mostly learned…what to do and what not to do in relationships, and different red flags…by observation of [her] parents.” Another respondent said that “seeing them things [she] didn’t like in [her parents] marriage…shaped her perspectives…[and she] know[s] what things [she]’d like in a future partner.” Yet another respondent said that “as a child and young adults, [she] saw the lack of romance [between her parents], which made [her] really averse to arranged marriage. As [she] grew older, [she] began to appreciate that they had such a stable partnership, although…[she] still can’t imagine getting an arranged marriage.”

Many respondents commented on how the dating system is different in the United States than it was when their parents were looking for partners. For example, one respondent said that “it’s difficult for [her] parents to understand dating, as they had no concept of it when they were [her] age.” Another respondent said that “in addition to a generational gap, there is also a gap in terms of understanding how young people in America date and why [South Asian Americans] would want to be a part of it.” One respondent shared that “universally among [his] South Asian friends, there’s a disconnect between the parent generation and the youth about choosing [a romantic] partner. The parents don’t seem to understand the concept of love with someone who [one isn’t] arranged to be married with. Parents seem to heavily invest their happiness into their

children marrying the ideal partner [who is] based on [the parents'] expectations." Another respondent commented on the impact of these messages, saying that she "feel[s] like [her] parents have influenced [her romantic relationships] by making [her] more afraid of doing stupid things for "romance." In general, [she] has to force her brain to accept the idea of "romance" as something that can be genuine and healthy and not as a silly, contrived waste of time" because those are the messages she received from her parents about romance and its place in relationships.

In terms of finding a partner, one respondent said that "it's difficult to keep both [one's] cultural identity and date outside [one's] culture at the same time." Respondents noted that they look for different characteristics in their romantic partners than their parents. For example, one respondent said that when looking for a significant other, one has "to worry a lot about [their] parents' perception of [their] partner, his/her family, religion, caste, etc." This same respondent said that overall, parents "tend to have different things that are important for them than [their children] do." Another respondent commented on how "it's difficult to be raised with such high expectation and then to deviate from them [[in order] to date how [respondent] want[s] and not as [their] family wants." Yet another respondent said that "dating is already confusing, [and] adding the complexities of trying to meet familial expectations leads to needless stress. Additionally, if [one] do[es] risk displeasing [their] parents by dating someone who might not match [parental] expectations, there is added pressure for the relationship to work simply so [as not] to face [their] family's 'I told you so' later."

Discussion

Once again, the purpose of this study was to explore the impact of socialization into two different cultures on South Asian Americans' conceptualization of romantic relationships in order to add more recent data of an American sample of 1.5- and second-generation immigrants into the

academic discussion. The overall results point to attitudes around dating being transformed in the diasporic context, with differences in respondent's beliefs around romantic relationships and those of their first-generation immigrant parents. There was support for the hypothesized themes in the qualitative results.

Quantitative Discussion

Importance of eleven characteristics in a romantic partner. Based on the results, educational level, profession, and intelligence all had extremely high rates of importance and extremely low levels of unimportance for respondents, which follows the global trend of educated individuals choosing romantic partners of comparable educational levels (Mare, 2015), which, in turn, impact profession and intelligence to some degree. These responses make sense considering that the majority, if not all, of the respondents were university-educated. Looking back at the history of South Asian migration to the United States in recent decades, most first-generation South Asian immigrants are highly-skilled and educated due to discriminatory immigration laws (SAADA, 2018), so it follows that these highly educated parents would instill the value of education and good careers into their children, who, in turn, would consider it an important criteria in a future romantic partner as well.

Personality and attraction were used as indicators of the cultural values that promote romantic love in relationships. That all respondents rated personality as having high importance and all respondents except for one (99.3%) rated attraction as having high importance indicates that 1.5- and second-generation immigrants internalize socialization messages from American society about the importance of romantic love and related forms of compatibility in relationship formation.

Caste was used as an indicator of the cultural values that promote endogamous social group characteristics over romantic love as foundations for stable romantic relationships. That the vast majority of respondents (92.5%) rated caste as having low importance as a characteristic for a future romantic partner, and only three (2.1%) respondents ranked it as being important at all, indicates lower preference for traditional South Asian values for relationship formation among 1.5- and second-generation South Asian American immigrants. One would expect the importance of religion and country/regional background to have similar response distributions as the importance of caste because of their role as criteria in forming arranged marriages instead of the even distributions that they do have, but instead, those are more evenly distributed, indicating that despite the transformation of certain cultural practices, respondents are still seeking romantic partners that are like them in specific ways, illustrating judicious biculturalism (Dasgupta, 1998). This also follows from the background literature's findings that second-generation youths generally seek bicultural partners and consciously attempt to preserve certain critical South Asian attitudes (Nesteruk & Gramescu, 2012).

Correlated relationships with how likely respondents were to believe they would have an arranged marriage. Respondents were more likely to believe they would have an arranged marriage if they felt positively about having an arranged marriage, if their parents had an arranged marriage, if they viewed their parents as compatible, or if they were single. Respondents were less likely to believe they would have an arranged marriage if they had lived in the United States for more time, if their mother had lived in the United States for more time, if their father had lived in the United States for more time, if they were unhappy with the current dating environment, or if they were in a relationship. These results support the role that parental relationship modeling plays in their children's conceptualizations of romantic relationship, and these results also indicate that

many respondents may view arranged marriages as a back-up plan of sorts for if they cannot find a spouse on their own or through the American system of dating. Additionally, these results hint at the role that varying levels of assimilation and acculturation into American society can play in value-shaping and conceptualizations of romantic relationships and relationship formation.

Respondents that believed they were more likely to have an arranged marriage rated importance of religion, caste, ethnicity, and country/regional background higher while rating importance of attraction, physical appearance, profession, income, and intelligence lower. It follows that respondents who believe they are more likely to have an arranged marriage would give higher importance to characteristics that align more closely with traditional South Asian values and promote endogamous social group characteristics over romantic love as foundations for stable romantic relationships.

Correlated relationships with how likely respondents were to believe they would have a love marriage. Respondents were more likely to believe they would have a love marriage if they expected to get married at an older age, if they were happy with the current dating environment, or if they were in a relationship. Respondents were less likely to believe they will have a love marriage if they felt positively about having an arranged marriage, if their parents had an arranged marriage, or if they were single. These results indicate that many respondents may believe that they will be able to find a spouse through the American system of dating, based on the availability of potential partners, even if doing so may take longer than other systems of relationship formation. These results also support the role that parental relationship modeling plays in their children's conceptualizations of romantic relationships.

Respondents that believed they were more likely to have a love marriage rated importance of education and profession higher while rating importance of caste and country/regional

background lower. It follows that respondents who believe they are more likely to have an arranged marriage would give lower importance to characteristics that align more closely with traditional South Asian values and promote endogamous social group characteristics over romantic love as foundations for stable romantic relationships, instead choosing to favor characteristics and measures of compatibility that promote individualism and romantic love.

Qualitative Discussion

Overall, respondents reported that their biggest challenges related to differences between themselves and their first-generation immigrant parents in selection criteria in terms of respondents' romantic partners, due to varying degrees of assimilation. Based on the socializing messages received by their children, respondents' parents tended to align more with South Asian values. The respondents themselves possessed values that existed in a liminal space between South Asian and American values, based on their responses on romantic relationship beliefs and behaviors.

For example, multiple respondents noted that, based on socializing messages from their parents and their own life experiences, they understood how meeting certain criteria, such as marrying someone of the same religion or South Asian ethnicity, would make forming a relationship and building a future together easier, but respondents were still less likely than their parents to view such criteria as absolute requirements where not possessing them would be a deal breaker.

The results of this study show that the discrepancy between what constitutes an absolute requirement for 1.5 and second-generation South Asian American immigrants when compared to their first-generation immigrant parents lies in the two groups' differing ideas of what needs marriage and romantic relationships will fulfill. Going back to Finkel et al.'s (2014) three models

of marriage, South Asian parents were forming relationships and marriages approximately twenty to forty years ago that were institutional to companionate, which focused on lower- and mid-level needs on Maslow's hierarchy. On the other hand, South Asian Americans in the United States today are attempting to fulfill self-expressive marriages that target higher-level needs on Maslow's hierarchy. For example, one respondent said that she "seek[s] romantic relationships for the purpose of learning more about [herself] and what [she] look[s] for in a partner. Another respondent added that the "destructive mindset…in [the] South Asian community to only date people that [one] would marry [leads to] many 16-19-year-old South Asians who form dumb attitudes towards relationships [and do not realize that] "get[ting] married [can] instead [be] a way to grow as a person."

First-generation South Asian immigrant parents are sending messages to their children to focus on more endogamous social group criteria such as caste, religion, and ethnicity when searching for a life partner. Meanwhile, South Asian Americans want to be with partners that make them happy and more are willing to cast aside restrictions around criteria like religion and ethnicity in favor of romantic love for a partner. Both parents and children want South Asian Americans to have happy, stable unions with good people, but they have different ideas on which criteria form the best foundation for life-long compatibility.

The overarching sentiment expressed in the text responses by the vast majority of respondents is that South Asian immigrant parents do not understand the American system of dating to form romantic relationships or have experience with romantic love, so their children are on their own when it comes to navigating this aspect of life, which led respondents to believe their growth in this area was stunted, especially compared to peers who do not have the same cultural hindrances. One respondent noted that South Asian parents are "not as open to dating as other

parents in other cultures are," which is why it is "not as easy to date other people, as the idea of "dating" isn't [as] easily accepted by the South Asian community as it is in other [communities]." Another respondent shared that the "overall experience is feeling stunted because [South Asian Americans] feel like [they]'re learning so late and starting so late." This same respondent said when she started dating in college, she "started feeling like a middle schooler [because she] felt like that's where [her] maturity in relationships was and [she] didn't know how to rapidly move it up to a twenty-year-old's dating" habits.

The enforcement of an unrealistic timeline becomes apparent when parents spend most of their children's adolescent lives giving them messages to avoid romantic relationships and then, once they hit a certain age or milestone, evidence from this study suggests age 20 years old or once they enter or graduate from college, expecting them to have marriage prospects lined up, without having the opportunity to date or form romantic relationships in their own ways. South Asian parents behave in this way because dating is not the primary method of relationship formation in South Asia, so often times they do not fully understand the point of dating, especially if the relationship does not result in marriage.

Many respondents also noted the inflated importance marriage is given by their parents and South Asian society in comparison to other types of romantic relationships, such as more casual dating. South Asian immigrant parents do not think of marriage in self-expressive terms, so they do not see romantic relationships as an avenue to personal growth, whereas their children view dating as a method of assessing what they want and need in a romantic partner and what they themselves have to offer. This leads parents to ingrain the notion that romantic relationships have to lead to marriage and should only be engaged in with an end goal in mind, which puts pressure on children to find the right partner on the first try for fear of bringing shame upon themselves or

their families by engaging in non-serious dating or premarital sex, which are taboo acts in South Asia. This intergenerational conflict generates internal conflicts within children of immigrants, as they attempt to behave in culturally acceptable ways while also attempting to undergo character development and maintain a sense of personal autonomy in matters of how they choose their romantic partners.

Because of this discordance in romantic relationship expectations, South Asian immigrant families often do not explicitly communicate about romantic relationships. Many of the respondents did not feel like they could talk about their past, present, or future romantic relationships with their parents, either because they knew their parents would disapprove of their choices or they were unsure of whether or not their parents would approve and were too scared of judgement or conflict to find out. This lack of communication led children to hide their romantic relationships from their parents and families because they were unsure of how and when to tell them. Often, the act of not telling one's parents about a romantic relationship is a way of retaining control in a culture where individuals are expected to subordinate their own goals to those of the collective, including and especially their families.

This study does not address the exact reasons for why this lack of communication exists from the parents' perspective. Perhaps they feel that by discussing matters of dating and romantic relationships, their children will take the communication as tacit permission to engage in these behaviors that the parents may or may not approve of. Similarly, parents may feel that if they do not discuss romantic relationships, then maybe their children will not get involved in them before their parents want them to. Or perhaps the lack of communication stems from parents' lack of understanding about dating; the culture around romantic relationship formation is so different between South Asia and the United States that many parents may not even realize that romantic

relationships should be points of discussion. After all, if they grew up without their parents talking to them about romantic relationships, then they may be socialized to rely on the same method of non-communication with their own children.

At least 67.1% of respondents' parents had an arranged marriage, so it is possible that many of their parents may not understand relationships based on romantic love, or respondents were brought up without seeing their parents be in love with each other. Because of this, many first-generation South Asian immigrant parents may not grasp the need many of their children have for romantic love to be a requirement for marriage or relationship formation more broadly. This is a major component in why South Asian Americans have to figure out romantic relationships and dating on their own, from their American peers, or from various forms of media.

Additionally, respondents have a hard time finding their own balance between South Asian culture and American culture, and this is especially true when it comes to romantic relationships. Respondents want to have ties to their South Asian culture and pass it on to their families in the future, but they also want to make their own decisions based on their own ideals, instead of being constrained solely by South Asian ideals that can often feel unnecessary and restrictive. While many respondents are grateful for their parents instilling certain aspects of South Asian culture in their lives, they also find it challenging to navigate when their parents still enforce South Asian cultural traditions that are very much in opposition with their American counterparts.

It is also possible that South Asian values in first-generation immigrant parents have undergone their own transformations due to their backgrounds and migration journeys. One thing noted by many respondents, both males and females, is the emphasis their parents put on education and career over romantic relationships, likely jointly stemming from a lack of understanding of romantic relationships and the fact that the vast majority of South Asian immigrant parents are

highly skilled and educated, so the same expectation is passed down to their children. For foreign-born parents, education opened opportunities that would otherwise not have been available to them; it was their ticket to life in the United States. These types of messages implicitly socialize children to regard romantic relationships as a distraction, not to be had until one is older and ready to settle into marriage, which once again connects back to the idea many South Asian immigrant parents possess that, in order to be worthwhile, all romantic relationships must lead to marriage.

Limitations and Future Directions

The two most restrictive limitations over the course of this study were time and access to participants. Due to limited resources, this work was limited to collecting data from respondents only covering 1.5 and second generation South Asian immigrants. Limited access to participants also impacted how the survey sample was selected. Since a snowball sample was used, we have no idea how representative the sample is of the underlying population, and, thus, we do not know how representative these results are of the target population. Future researchers with more resources should conduct in-person interviews or focus groups to bolster the qualitative data collected in this work through follow-up questions, for example, in order to understand more about other influences on romantic relationships in South Asian Americans. It would be very informative and beneficial to conduct a multi-generations study by collecting data directly from immigrant parents along with their children, so the results could give more insight into what beliefs South Asian immigrant parents hold instead of inferring them from the socializing messages their children receive, thus allowing research to explore why they have the beliefs that they do.

Being able to expand on the survey questions or add another dimension to data collection would allow researchers to tackle the research questions from a more holistic perspective. One addition to the survey questions would be including more direct measures of assimilation, such as

questions from the Abbreviated Multidimensional Acculturation Scale (AMAS) that asses both the receiving culture (the United States) and the culture of origin (South Asia), to strengthen the argument instead of relying solely on the indirect measures used in this study. From the data collected through this survey, there were differences in responses based on how long the respondent has been in the United States. Direct measures of assimilation and acculturation were not employed in this study. It would be beneficial for future work in this area to add the dimension of direct measures of assimilation and acculturation into the study.

Additionally, due to limitations on time, I was not able to analyze the results based on as many dimensions as I would have preferred. I suggest that future directions in this study would be to analyze the qualitative responses based on the respondent's gender to see if there are distinctions in socialization messages from parents and the greater South Asian community or in beliefs and behaviors of the respondents themselves. Multiple studies point to differential socialization based on gender around romantic relationships in South Asian households (Dasgupta, 1998; Agarwal, 1991; Menon, 1989; Domadia, 1988), so comparing the male responses to female responses would allow researchers to examine if the results from this study align with conclusions derived from previous studies around romantic relationships of non-first generation South Asian immigrants. Based on the background literature, I would predict that females would receive more parental messages socializing them away from dating and more Americanized romantic relationships than their male counterparts would receive, but a true answer cannot be given until further study is done. Moreover, since the behaviors and beliefs of second-generation immigrant daughters can be used as indirect measures of her family's assimilation into the host society (Joshi, 2000), analyzing qualitative responses on the basis of gender would allow for further study into the varying levels

of assimilation and acculturation of South Asian immigrants, especially when daughters' responses are compared to those of their male counterparts and first-generation parents.

Conclusion

The three main takeaways from this study relate to parental socialization messages, variation among South Asian parents, and differences in need fulfillment.

First, parental socialization messages relating to romantic relationships come in various forms, ranging from positive to negative, explicit (directly) to implicit (indirectly), and through multiple mediums. For example, socialization messages can be received directly through words and conversations between South Asian American adolescents and their parents or indirectly through South Asian Americans observing their parents and their interactions with each other, internalizing and emulating the dynamics of the romantic relationships they grew up witnessing.

Second, although similar themes were expressed by a large population of the respondents, "South Asian parents are not a monolith," as one respondent so eloquently put it. For example, one of the respondent's mothers has said that respondent "shouldn't get married, that marriage may be a way to tie her down." This same respondent has "discussed having a baby by [her]self and [her mother] has been extremely supportive," which is an outlier amongst all the other responses. Another respondent shared that she is "polygamous and dating people outside [of her] race and both [her] same and different gender" and feels comfortable doing so because of her parents' "hands-off trust." It is important to account for variations in individual attitudes even among relatively homogenous populations, and variations in individual attitudes were seen to some extent through the responses in this study.

Lastly, there seems to be a larger discrepancy between South Asian American young adults and their parents relating to the needs which they are aiming to fulfill through romantic

relationships and the process through which they are attempting to find partners rather than what they actually want in a romantic partner or romantic relationship. The study shows that these differences in needs and processes are more direct causes of conflict than the other tested factors, and these conflicts can be intergenerational between family and the larger community and also internal around identity and belief formation, especially in South Asian Americans' formative years.

Overall, socialization messages from South Asian immigrant parents are tailored towards romantic relationships that more closely align with South Asian values while their children attempt to pursue romantic relationships that are more closely aligned with American values, if not in a liminal space between the two cultures, leading to internal and intergenerational conflicts in many cases.

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Tables

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of key study variables

Variable	*Min*	*Max*	*M or %*	*SD*	*N*
Parents' compatibility	1.00	5.00	3.54	1.33	145
Mother's happiness	1.00	5.00	3.80	1.37	133
Father's happiness	1.00	5.00	3.92	1.26	133
Length parents knew each other before marriage	1.00	3.00	1.78	0.85	145
Respondent's age	1.00	8.00	5.01	1.84	142
How often parents talk to respondent about romantic relationships	1.00	5.00	2.86	1.17	137
How long respondent has lived in the United States	2.00	5.00	4.66	0.62	146
How long respondent's mother has lived in the United States	1.00	6.00	5.25	0.91	146
How long respondent's father has lived in the United States	1.00	6.00	5.41	0.92	146
How likely respondent will have love marriage	1.00	5.00	4.50	0.84	146
How likely respondent will have arranged marriage	1.00	5.00	1.51	0.86	146
How respondent feels about having arranged marriage	1.00	5.00	1.85	1.06	146
Respondent's happiness with current dating environment	1.00	5.00	3.36	1.13	146
Expected age of marriage	1.00	4.00	2.22	0.53	146
Importance of religion	1.00	5.00	3.25	1.17	146
Importance of ethnicity	1.00	5.00	2.92	1.26	146
Importance of country/regional background	1.00	5.00	2.66	1.18	146
Importance of income	1.00	5.00	3.52	0.98	146
Importance of intelligence	2.00	5.00	4.55	0.58	146
Importance of educational level	1.00	5.00	4.50	0.67	146
Importance of profession	1.00	5.00	3.89	0.85	146

Importance of personality	4.00	5.00	4.92	0.28	146
Importance of attraction	3.00	5.00	4.73	0.46	146
Importance of caste	1.00	5.00	1.31	0.70	146
Importance of physical appearance	2.00	5.00	3.88	0.85	146
Respondent's gender [a]	0.00	1.00	64%	0.48	146
Parents' marriage type [b]	0.00	1.00	67%	0.46	142
Respondent's relationship status [c]	0.00	1.00	39%	0.49	146
Partner's ethnicity [d]	0.00	1.00	26%	0.44	146

Note. [a] percent female, [b] percent arranged marriage, [c] percent in a relationship, [d] percent S. Asian

Appendix

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to be part of a research study. This consent form will help you choose whether or not to participate in the study. Please ask if you need clarification or additional information about this consent document.

What is the study about and why are we doing it?

The purpose of the study is to learn more about how 1.5 and 2nd generation South Asian Americans view dating, love, and marriage, with special attention being given to how differences between their and their parents' experiences are related to personal beliefs and behaviors.

Eligibility Requirements

This study is targeted towards a particular population. In order to be eligible for the survey, you will need to meet the following criteria:

- Be between the age of 18 - 25 years old
- Be of South Asian ethnicity
- Be a 1.5 or 2nd generation immigrant to the United States

If you are unsure of whether or not you are eligible for this study, there are screening questions on the next page that will help you determine that. If you select a response that indicates that you do not fit into the target population, you will automatically be taken to the end of the survey.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete an online survey. The survey includes questions about your demographics, romantic relationships, and parental relationships.

How long will this study take and how many people will be in the study?

Participation in this study will take approximately 10 minutes. The study will include no more than 200 participants.

What risks and discomforts might you experience from being in this study?

If you choose to participate in this study, risks will be minimal. You may find some of the questions upsetting, but we expect that this would not be different from the kinds of things you discuss with family or friends. Other than the screening questions on the next page, you may skip any questions you feel uncomfortable answering. You may also end the survey at any time by closing your internet browser. In addition, if you feel distress from completing this survey, you can reach counselors for emotional support at any time by calling 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or texting HOME to 741741 to reach the Crisis Text Line.

How could you benefit from this study?

You will receive no direct benefit from participating in this study; however, your participation will help us learn more about South Asian Americans' romantic beliefs and behaviors.

What data will we collect from you?

As part of this study, we will collect survey data from you about your demographics, romantic relationships, and parental relationships.

How will we protect your information?

If you choose to participate in this study, the information you share with us will be kept completely confidential to the full extent of the law. We will not collect your name, email, or additional identifying information. Information from the study may be given to the following:

- Representatives of UT Austin and the UT Austin Institutional Review Board
- Officials at the Department of Health and Human Services
- Other researchers for future research studies; the data shared with other researchers will not include information that can directly identify you, as we are not collecting identifying information.

We plan to publish the results of this study. To protect your privacy, we will not include any information that could directly identify you. Findings will only be presented as summaries of the study sample, not as responses from individual participants.

What will happen to the information we collect about you after the study is over?

If you choose to participate in this study, the information you share with us will be kept completely confidential. We will not collect your name, email, or other information that can directly identify you. Your responses will be stored in a HIPAA-compliant, secure database that is only accessible to the primary investigator and members of the research team. Study findings will be presented only in summary form.

How will we compensate you for being part of the study?

You will not receive any type of payment from researchers at The University of Texas at Austin for your participation. You may receive an incentive from your panel provider as described in the email you received with the link to this survey.

Your Participation in this Study is Voluntary

It is completely up to you to decide whether or not to participate in this research study. Participating in this study is voluntary. Your decision to participate will not affect your relationship with The University of Texas at Austin. If you decide not to participate in this study, you will not lose any benefits or rights you already had. Even if you decide to participate in this study now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. If you decide to withdraw before completing the survey, your data will not be submitted as long as you do not press the submit button.

Contact Information for the Study Team and Questions about the Research

If you have any questions about this research, you may contact the following:

Primary Investigator: Isha Mehta
Email: icmehta@utexas.edu

Contact Information for Questions about Your Rights as a Research Participant

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, wish to obtain more information, ask questions, or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the following:

The University of Texas at Austin
Institutional Review Board
Phone: 512-232-1543
Email: irb@austin.utexas.edu
Please reference study number 2019-01-0153.

Q2 By clicking the yes button below, you are agreeing to participate in this study. If at any time you wish to stop participating, simply close your browser window.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If By clicking the yes button below, you are agreeing to participate in this study. If at any time y... = No

Start of Block: Self-Screening

Q3 Are you between the ages of 18 and 25?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Are you between the ages of 18 and 25? = No

Q4 What is your ethnicity?

- South Asian (i.e., ethnic background from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, or the Maldives) (1)
- Other (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If What is your ethnicity? = Other

Q5 Is your primary residence in the United States?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Is your primary residence in the United States? = No

Q6 Which immigrant generation do you identify as?

- 1st generation (you were born outside the United States and moved to the United States after age 12 years old) (1)
- 1.5 generation (you were born outside the United States and moved to the United States by age 12 years old) (2)
- 2nd generation (you were born in the United States but a parent moved to the United States as an adult age 18 or above) (3)
- None of the above (4)

Skip To: End of Survey If Which immigrant generation do you identify as? = 1st generation (you were born outside the United States and moved to the United States after age 12 years old)
Skip To: End of Survey If Which immigrant generation do you identify as? = None of the above

Start of Block: Biographical Information

Q7 Age:

▼ 18 (1) ... 25 (8)

Q8 Where were you born?

- United States (1)
- India (2)
- Pakistan (3)
- Bangladesh (4)
- Sri Lanka (5)
- Nepal (6)
- Bhutan (7)
- The Maldives (8)
- Other (please specify) (9) _____

Q9 Gender:

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- None of the above (please specify) (3) _____

Q10 How long have you lived in the United States (total years)?

- 0 - 5 years (1)
- 5 - 10 years (2)
- 10 - 15 years (3)
- 15 - 20 years (4)
- 20 - 25 years (5)

Q11 Where was your mother born?

- United States (1)
- India (2)
- Pakistan (3)
- Bangladesh (4)
- Sri Lanka (5)
- Nepal (6)
- Bhutan (7)
- The Maldives (8)
- Other (please specify) (9) _____

Q12 At what age did your mother come to the United States?

- 0 - 10 years old (1)
- 10 - 20 years old (2)
- 20 - 30 years old (3)
- 30 - 40 years old (4)
- 40+ years old (5)

Q13 How long has your mother lived in the United States?

- 0 - 5 years (1)
- 5 - 10 years (2)
- 10 - 15 years (3)
- 15 - 20 years (4)
- 20 - 25 years (5)
- 25+ years (6)

Q14 Where was your father born?

- United States (1)
- India (2)
- Pakistan (3)
- Bangladesh (4)
- Sri Lanka (5)
- Nepal (6)
- Bhutan (7)
- The Maldives (8)

- Other (please specify) (9) _____

Q15 At what age did your father come to the United States?

- 0 - 10 years old (1)
- 10 - 20 years old (2)
- 20 - 30 years old (3)
- 30 - 40 years old (4)
- 40+ years old (5)

Q16 How long has your father been in the United States?

- 0 - 5 years (1)
- 5 - 10 years (2)
- 10 - 15 years (3)
- 15 - 20 years (4)
- 20 - 25 years (5)
- 25+ years (6)

Start of Block: Parents' Romantic Relationship

Q17 Did your parents have an "arranged marriage" or a "love marriage"?

- Arranged marriage (i.e., no romantic relationship prior to engagement) (1)
- Love marriage (i.e., had romantic relationship prior to engagement) (2)
- Don't know (3)

Display This Question:
If Did your parents have an "arranged marriage" or a "love marriage"? = Arranged marriage (i.e., no romantic relationship prior to engagement)

Q18 Who arranged your parents' marriage?

- Family or friends (1)
- Marriage bureau (2)
- Other (3) _____
- Don't know (4)

Q19 What is your parents' current marital status?

- Married (1)
- Divorced (2)
- Separated (3)
- Never married & together (4)
- Never married & not together (5)
- Widowed (7)

Display This Question:
If What is your parents' current marital status? = Married

Q20 How long have they been married?

- 0 - 10 years (1)
- 10 - 20 years (2)
- 20 - 30 years (3)
- 30+ years (4)

Display This Question:
If What is your parents' current marital status? = Married
Or What is your parents' current marital status? = Divorced
Or What is your parents' current marital status? = Separated
Or What is your parents' current marital status? = Widowed

Q21 How long did your parents know each other before they got married?

- Less than 6 months (1)
- 6 months - one year (2)
- More than one year (3)

Display This Question:
If What is your parents' current marital status? = Married
Or What is your parents' current marital status? = Never married & together

Q22 How happy do you think your mother is in the relationship?

- Very happy (1)
- Slightly happy (2)
- Neutral (3)
- Slightly unhappy (4)
- Very unhappy (5)

Display This Question:
If What is your parents' current marital status? = Married
Or What is your parents' current marital status? = Never married & together

Q23 How happy do you think your father is in the relationship?

- Very happy (1)
- Slightly happy (2)
- Neutral (3)
- Slightly unhappy (4)
- Very unhappy (5)

Q24 How compatible do you think your parents are?

- Very compatible (1)
- Somewhat compatible (2)
- Neutral (3)
- Somewhat incompatible (4)
- Very incompatible (5)

Start of Block: Your Romantic Relationships

Q25 What is your current relationship status?

- Married (1)
- Engaged (2)
- In a relationship (3)
- Single & dating (4)
- Single & not dating (5)

Display This Question:
If What is your current relationship status? = Married
Or What is your current relationship status? = Engaged
Or What is your current relationship status? = In a relationship

Q26 How long have you been in your romantic relationship?

- Less than one year (1)
- 1 - 2 years (2)
- 2 - 3 years (3)
- 3 - 4 years (4)
- 4+ years (5)

Display This Question:
If What is your current relationship status? = Married
Or What is your current relationship status? = Engaged
Or What is your current relationship status? = In a relationship

Q27 How happy are you in your current romantic relationship?

- Very happy (1)
- Somewhat happy (2)
- Neutral (3)
- Somewhat unhappy (4)
- Very unhappy (5)

Display This Question:
If What is your current relationship status? = Married
Or What is your current relationship status? = Engaged
Or What is your current relationship status? = In a relationship

Q28 Do your parents know you are in a romantic relationship?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Unknown (3)

Display This Question:
If What is your current relationship status? = Married
Or What is your current relationship status? = Engaged
Or What is your current relationship status? = In a relationship

Q29 What is the ethnicity of your romantic partner?

- South Asian (1)
- Other (please specify) (2) _____

Q30 How happy are you with the current dating environment/opportunities?

- Very happy (1)
- Somewhat happy (2)
- Neutral (3)
- Somewhat unhappy (4)
- Very unhappy (5)

Start of Block: Relationship Expectations

Q31 Do you expect to get married?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Unsure (3)

Q32 At what age do you expect to marry?

- Under 25 years old (1)
- 25 - 29 years old (2)
- 30 - 34 years old (3)
- 35+ years old (4)

Q33 At what age would your parents want you to get married?

- Under 25 years old (1)
- 25 - 29 years old (2)
- 30 - 34 years old (3)
- 35+ years old (4)

Q34 How do you feel about getting an arranged married?

- Very supportive (1)
- Somewhat supportive (2)
- Neutral (3)
- Somewhat opposed (4)
- Very opposed (5)

Q35 How likely is it that you will have an arranged marriage?

- Very likely (1)
- Somewhat likely (2)
- Neutral (3)
- Somewhat unlikely (4)
- Very unlikely (5)

Q36 How likely is it that you will have a love marriage?

- Very likely (1)
- Somewhat likely (2)
- Neutral (3)
- Somewhat unlikely (4)
- Very unlikely (5)

Q37 Do you have a preference of the ethnicity of your future partner (who you would marry or be in a long-term relationship with)?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Display This Question:
If Do you have a preference of the ethnicity of your future partner (who you would marry or be in a... = Yes

Q38 What is your preference of your future partner's ethnicity?

- South Asian (1)
- Other (please specify) (2) _____

Q39 Please rate how important each of the below characteristics are to you in a future serious relationship partner.

Religion (1)	Very Important (1)	Important (2)	Neutral (3)	Unimportant (4)	Very unimportant (5)
Educational Level (2)	Very Important (1)	Important (2)	Neutral (3)	Unimportant (4)	Very unimportant (5)
Profession (3)	Very Important (1)	Important (2)	Neutral (3)	Unimportant (4)	Very unimportant (5)
Income (4)	Very Important (1)	Important (2)	Neutral (3)	Unimportant (4)	Very unimportant (5)
Physical Appearance (5)	Very Important (1)	Important (2)	Neutral (3)	Unimportant (4)	Very unimportant (5)
Personality (6)	Very Important (1)	Important (2)	Neutral (3)	Unimportant (4)	Very unimportant (5)
Attraction (7)	Very Important (1)	Important (2)	Neutral (3)	Unimportant (4)	Very unimportant (5)
Caste (8)	Very Important (1)	Important (2)	Neutral (3)	Unimportant (4)	Very unimportant (5)
Ethnicity (9)	Very Important (1)	Important (2)	Neutral (3)	Unimportant (4)	Very unimportant (5)
Intelligence (10)	Very Important (1)	Important (2)	Neutral (3)	Unimportant (4)	Very unimportant (5)
Country/regional background (11)	Very Important (1)	Important (2)	Neutral (3)	Unimportant (4)	Very unimportant (5)

Start of Block: Parental Relationship

Q40 How often do your parents talk to you (alone or with siblings) about romantic relationships?

- Very often (1)
- Often (2)
- Some of the time (3)
- Rarely (4)
- Not at all (5)

Q41 What types of messages did you receive from your parents about romantic relationships?

Q42 How do you think the messages you received from your parents have influenced your attitudes and behaviors regarding dating, love, and marriage?

Q43 What do you think are unique challenges about dating as a South Asian American?

Q44 Additional comments related to dating, relationships, or marriage

Biography

Isha Mehta was born in Sugar Land, Texas on June 6, 1997, and has lived there for the entirety of her life with her parents and older sister. She enrolled in Government and the Plan II Honors program at the University of Texas at Austin in 2015 and has since added a minor in History. In college, she spent a summer abroad in Cape Town, worked as a research assistant in two separate policy institutions, participated in community-based tutoring and mentorship programs, edited for the Texas Undergraduate Law Review, was a member of Liberal Arts Council, and served as President of GirlAdvocates!, a campus organization dedication to service and female empowerment. She graduated with honors in 2019 and will be moving to Dallas later this year to begin work as a Business Analyst at Capital One.